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PASSAGES
IN THE
LIFE AND MINISTRY
OF
ELBERT OSBORN,

An Itinerant Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

ILLUSTRATING
THE PROVIDENCE AND GRACE OF GOD.

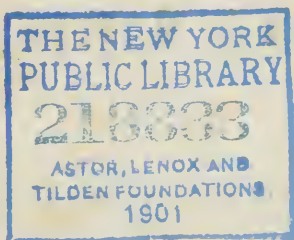
Written by Himself.

"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED ME."

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR, AT THE CONFER-
ENCE OFFICE, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

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1847.



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RECOMMENDATIONS.

COPIES of communications from Rev. George Coles, assistant editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal; Rev. Edwin E. Griswold, member of the New-York Conference, now pastor of the M. E. Church in Hempstead, N. Y., formerly pastor of the M. E. Church in John-street, New-York; and John M. Howe, M. D., New-York.

“NOVEMBER 5, 1846.

“To all whom it may concern :

“I have read the entire manuscript entitled, ‘Passages in the Life and Ministry of Elbert Osborn, an Itinerant Minister of the Methodist E. Church, &c.; and I hesitate not to say that, as a true and faithful narrative of God’s dealings with one whose sole desire seems to have been to do the will of God, it is entitled to the fullest confidence of any one into whose hands it may fall. With a single eye to the glory of God in every line, the author, with a beautiful simplicity and unwavering truthfulness, traces those passages in his past life which strikingly illustrate the grace and providence of God.

“G. COLES.”

"NEW-YORK, *May* 25, 1846.

"DEAR BROTHER, I have read your manuscript with much satisfaction. It is full of incident, and sufficiently interspersed with brief and pointed practical observations. If published, I think it will be very useful to the humble followers of Christ.

"E. E. GRISWOLD."

"NEW-YORK, *June* 23, 1847.

"I concur in the opinions expressed by the Rev. Geo. Coles and the Rev. E. E. Griswold, and heartily desire that the book may be extensively circulated and read, believing that it will be conducive in cultivating among professing Christians a continued and unwavering trust in the providence and grace of God.

"JOHN M. HOWE."

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PASSAGES IN THE LIFE
OF
ELBERT OSBORN.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD TILL
HE WAS LICENSED TO EXHORT, 1800-1821.

ON the banks of a little stream which winds its way among the hills and valleys of Fairfield, in Connecticut, I spent the years of my early childhood. Sasco is the name of this rivulet, and it is evidently a name of Indian origin. I was born April 7th, 1800. The place of my birth was about two miles from its mouth, where it pours its humble tribute into the Long Island Sound. My grandfather's grandfather, whose name was Richard Osborn, resided in the town of Fairfield; and from him, I believe, descended the numerous families of that name still residing in Fairfield and the adjacent towns. He was the owner of one of the *long lots*, as they were termed, which were from twenty to fifty rods in

width, and eleven or twelve miles in length. The curious reader may wish to know the cause of fields being laid out in such a singular form. As it gives a specimen of Yankee ingenuity, counteracting royal oppression, I will give the account which has been handed down from our ancestors:—In the reign of King James II., Sir Edmund Andros was sent over to abridge the liberties of the New-England colonies, and take away the power of electing governors from the people. Public property was to be seized in the name of the king. The inhabitants of this part of the coast of Connecticut were anxious to have as much land as possible surveyed and recognized as private property. Hence, they laid out these fields, or “lots,” as they called them, extending northward, from a road running parallel with the shore, eleven or twelve miles, into the unsettled part of the country. Each of the inhabitants, I suppose, had a lot running thus far back; and hence, a large tract became private property, which would otherwise have fallen into the hands of the crown, if King James’s abdication had not led to the removal of his creature, Andros, from the government of New-England. My father owned a small piece of land, including about four acres, which was a part of the original *Osborn long lot*, and there,

when hoeing corn and performing other kinds of agricultural labor, have I often exclaimed in my mind, "Our fathers, where are they?"

My father's name was Levi Osborn, who, when about seven years of age, was deprived by death of his father. His widowed mother was soon after called to behold the lifeless body of her eldest son David, brought home from the field of battle, near the principal village in Fairfield, when that village was consumed by the British army in the revolutionary war. He had previously been a prisoner of the British in the city of New-York, but had been released, and, not long after his return, fell in battle while opposing the invaders of his country. Often have I heard, in my childhood, my dear parents relate the awful scenes of those days. And the reader will not wonder that I early imbibed a dread of the horrors of war, and that I rejoice in hoping the time will come when "swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks."

I believe my parents both thought that they obtained peace by believing in Christ, before their marriage; and, soon after their marriage, they were admitted into the Congregational Church in that part of Fairfield called Greenfield. The minister who performed the mar-

riage ceremony, and with whose church they were afterward connected, was the Rev. Timothy Dwight, D. D., afterward president of Yale College.

For a few years my father endeavored to serve God ; but the state of experimental religion was very low, I fear, in that vicinity in those days. Contentions arose in the church, which were increased by political prejudices ; and these things, in connection with worldly cares and the desire of riches, gradually drew his heart away from the Lord. In such a state of mind, the faults and failings of professors of religion, and especially of ministers, were magnified in his views ; the arguments of skeptics insinuated themselves into his mind ; their sophisms shook his faith ; and some of the opinions which he had been taught made the downfall more easy ; and before I was six years of age he was secretly infidel in his sentiments. O how much harm is done by quarrels among professing Christians, and how carefully ought ministers, especially, to shun the appearance of evil, lest through their fault some soul should perish for whom Christ died !

My pious mother, though she did not know that her companion had become an unbeliever in theory, yet saw, to her sorrow, that he was

neglecting the practical duties of Christianity, and doubtless offered up fervent prayers to God in his behalf. It was a grief to her that he was disposed to permit a part of his house to be occupied occasionally as a ball-room. In the mean time, although I was very fond of reading and study, yet the exhibition of pride and self-will, which occasionally took place in my conduct, must have pained her heart. One of the earliest circumstances which I can remember was this:—A schoolmate of my elder brother called one morning on his way to school. He addressed some conversation to me in a friendly way; but there was something in his manner which disgusted me, and, to his great surprise, I struck him in the face with my fist.

At another time, when I put on a pair of new shoes, my vanity and inconsideration were such that I well remember walking in a very consequential way back and forth across the room in which my brother, ten years older than myself, was sitting. As these shoes were made sharp-pointed at the toes, according to the fashion of the times, I took the liberty of giving my brother now and then a slight kick with my newly shod feet. He remonstrated, but I foolishly persisted: he threatened to cut off the toes, but I did not heed his threats, supposing he would

not put them in execution ; but when he took them off my feet, and laid one of them on a block, and raised the ax, my consternation was great. He however contented himself with cutting off such an extremely minute portion of the point of the sole, that no injury was done, but I was effectually cured of my kicking propensities.

Young as I was, the amusements in my father's ball-room excited my attention, and led to some attempts at imitation. What would have been the result to me had my father continued his course is known only to God. The members of churches in that vicinity, in general, said nothing against dancing. It is true, my pious mother advised me to read the Bible, and I followed her advice ; and one passage particularly made a strong impression upon my mind, namely, Matt. xii, 36 : "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment." But my heart was yet under the dominion of pride and other evil passions of our nature ; and my pride was often flattered by the remarks made by many of the acquaintances of my parents concerning the proficiency in learning which they were pleased to say that I exhibited.

My eldest brother, David, who was thirteen

years older than myself, was very studious. He took great pains to assist me in my studies, and particularly in acquiring some knowledge of the rudiments of arithmetic. He was an affectionate brother, moral in his habits, and I trust truly pious. My father loved him very tenderly, and had not ventured to communicate any of his infidel notions to him, when that God, who often takes his children from the evil to come, and also, by affliction, frequently brings the prodigal to a sense of his situation, saw fit to call my eldest brother from time to eternity. A fever of nine days' continuance terminated his mortal existence, in May, 1807. He was enabled to give satisfactory testimony to his friends, who conversed with him in his last illness, that Christ, the Saviour of sinners, was precious to his soul. This bereavement had an awakening influence on my father's mind. Even before his son's death, such a sense of his own ingratitude to God pressed upon his mind, that he sunk down to the ground and cried for mercy. If I recollect right, he told me that Jesus Christ seemed to be very near him, and that his presence filled him with awful horror. No more balls were attended at my father's house after the gentle spirit of my brother fled to the better world. Dr. H. Humphrey, then minister of a Congrega-

tional church about four miles from my father's house, and since president of Amherst College, Massachusetts, preached the funeral sermon from Psalm xxxiv, 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." After a few weeks, the bereaved father obtained a satisfactory sense of reclaiming and forgiving mercy. Now he visited the house of prayer, and talked with his family on the things of religion and of God. Occasionally he went some distance to hear the preaching of Methodist ministers, and was much pleased with their mode of preaching, and their views of gospel doctrines. And here let me say to the backslider, (if any such person should read these pages,) that perhaps God may take from *him* a beloved child, or some other dear relative, to call him back to God; or, what would be more awful, the wanderer himself may be cut off in his sins. Had my ungodly father, instead of my pious brother, been taken away, how dreadful would have been the event!

It was not till early in the year 1808 that I heard a Methodist minister preach. His name was Seth Crowell, and it was in a private house. I had never seen a person kneel in prayer before; and I looked at the kneeling minister, and the few kneeling individuals also, with amaze-

ment. I was still more amazed to hear some of them "*speak out aloud in meeting*," saying "Amen," in time of prayer. The next day this same minister preached in a school-house near another place of worship. I wished to hear Mr. C. again, but feared the scorn of some of my acquaintances; I therefore waited till they had gone into their place of worship, and then I ran over to the school-house. Young as I was, I found that "the fear of man bringeth a snare." Mr. Crowell's text, on that occasion, was 1 John i, 8-10. Those who will turn to Dr. Bangs' description of this servant of the Lord, as found in the History of Methodism, vol. iii, pages 374-377, can form probably a better idea of the sermon than I can give them. One circumstance occurred which I will mention:—A thoughtless young woman amused herself by whispering and laughing in time of preaching; but her mirth was suitably and effectually re-proved by the minister, who said to her, in a most solemn manner, "Will you laugh an ambassador of God in the face?" During the next day Mr. Crowell called at our house and took dinner there; and this was the first pastoral visit made at my father's residence by a Methodist minister. In the mean time, the sermons and pious conversations which I had

heard, and the religious books which I had read, tended, with God's blessing, to make some favorable impression on my youthful mind concerning the necessity of the religion of the heart. At length my father took me with him one evening to hear another Methodist minister, the Rev. Zalmon Lyon, who now rests, I trust, in Abraham's bosom. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," &c., was the blessed text on which this good man preached on that occasion. The meeting was at a private house. I suppose there were a few Methodists there from another neighborhood, and some other serious persons, and so the good minister held a class meeting after preaching. My father and myself tarried in the class meeting. This was the first meeting of that kind which either of us had ever attended. Something which I saw, or heard, or felt, in that meeting, led me to say in childish simplicity to my dear mother, when I returned home, "I believe I shall be a Methodist."

Not long after, perhaps the next day, while praying alone to God for his blessing to be communicated to my soul, I trust he answered my prayer. I well remember the place where I prayed. It was in a retired spot, in the open air; and it was on a cloudy sabbath morning

when I trust that I was first enabled to rejoice through Christ Jesus in the light of God's reconciled countenance. This occurred when I was between eight and nine years old. After this event my feelings were very different from what they were before, particularly in one respect. Before, I had been exceedingly fond of praise, but after this I was more anxious to please God than to be applauded by man. Before this, some little attempts at composition had been commended by individuals, much to my gratification. But after this I felt desirous to write something which would do good to some one. A letter which I wrote to a cousin, and another to an uncle residing some distance from my father's house, were kindly transcribed by an only sister, a few years older than myself, so as to render them legible to those to whom they were written. The exercise of putting my thoughts on paper was a pleasing employment to me in those days.

In the course of that year Rev. N. W. Thomas and Rev. Jonathan Lyon were sent to that circuit. Mr. Thomas, in company with Rev. Aaron Sanford, (a local preacher, residing in Reading, about fourteen miles distant,) called at my father's house, took dinner, offered up prayer, and left an appointment for Mr. L. to preach.

It would seem from Dr. Bangs' History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. i, p. 292, that Mr. Sanford was the first man who united with the Methodists in New-England. He, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Lyon, are yet living, while multitudes, whom they have been instrumental in gathering into the church of Christ, have gone before them to the fields of the blessed. Mr. Lyon came at the appointed time, and preached, I think, from these words, "This man receiveth sinners." At this meeting, for the first time in a public assembly, I kneeled during prayer. This I did from a sense of duty, for I had read those passages in the Bible which speak of this posture of devotion as practiced by ancient saints, as well as the invitation to "bow down and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Conscientiously, therefore, did I worship in this manner, while my father, mother, brother, and sister, continued to stand, according to their former custom. Once in two weeks Mr. T. and Mr. L. preached at my father's house on Saturday evening; and after the lapse of five or six months, both of my parents, my only brother, my only sister, and myself, offered ourselves for membership to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and were admitted on probation by the Rev. Mr. Lyon.

In the course of that summer I often rode with my father about seven miles on sabbath-day to hear the gospel preached in a small Methodist church, called *Lee's Chapel*. This name was given to it in honor of Jesse Lee, who may be called the apostle of New-England Methodism. This building was the first Methodist church erected in New-England. Well do I remember that small, plain building, as well as the first love-feast which I ever attended. It was in the summer of 1808, and was held in Lee's Chapel. The house was full, not only of people, but, as it seemed to me, of the glory of God. One of the ministers, who is still living, and a member of the New-York Conference, was so overwhelmed with the presence of God, that for a time his bodily strength departed from him. To my soul it was a solemn and joyful occasion. Many were the seasons of religious enjoyment which I also had in private prayer. But sometimes, through unfaithfulness, and at other times by the temptations of the enemy, I was cast down in my feelings. The following passage of Scripture made a lasting impression on my mind: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But while I rejoice that I read these words with so much interest, and while I mourn

that I have not been more careful to act accordingly, I am sensible that, through the weakness of my childhood, I had some very mistaken notions about my duty, which in some cases produced needless solicitude.

Being very fond of study and reading, and going to school most of the time, my health was probably in some measure affected, and this may have had some effect in depressing my spirits. Yet I was not confined to my room by illness, except in a few cases, and for a very short time. Some of my father's acquaintances, however, supposed that my life would be very short. But while I am writing I can adopt the language of Caleb, (see Josh. xiv, 10,) "The Lord hath kept me alive these forty and five years." Doubtless he has seen fit to preserve me that I may labor to do good. But ah! how feeble have my efforts been! Among the books which I read before I was twelve years old were the following:—Edwards's History of Redemption, Haweis's Church History, one volume of Wesley's Sermons, Simpson's Plea for Religion, Fletcher's Appeal, Memoirs of Mrs. Rogers, Lackington's Confessions, Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, one volume of Robertson's History of America, a volume of the Spectator, Dr. Young's

Night Thoughts, Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart.

Several of these books were purchased by my father of the Methodist ministers who preached on that circuit, and some of them were borrowed of my father's neighbors. A number of these books were of a decidedly religious tendency. I have reason to thank God for the deep and lasting impressions made on my mind through their instrumentality; and I have no doubt much good has been done through the books which the Methodist itinerants have scattered through the land.

In the year 1809 Billy Hibbard and Isaac Candee were appointed to our circuit, which embraced the whole of Fairfield county. Now, in that county there are about fifteen ministers of the Methodist E. Church employed, so that there is a far greater amount of stated ministerial labor, and especially of sabbath labor, enjoyed now, than in former days. "Where much is given, much is required." Mr. Hibbard was a very eccentric man, but a very devoted minister of Christ. His manner of speaking, his gestures, and the appearance of his countenance, were so singular, that I often gazed upon him with deep interest while he was speaking. Soon

after he came on the circuit a camp meeting was held within the bounds of the circuit, at Stamford, about eighteen miles from my father's house. We all felt a great desire to be present, at least a part of the time. I will not disguise the fact that some curiosity mingled with my desire for spiritual benefit. I had heard much of these meetings; much was said for and against them, and I wished to see for myself. Glad was I when I learned that my father had made arrangements with a neighbor of his to go with him in the same wagon to the camp meeting. Accordingly, about two o'clock in the morning of Thursday, the neighbor and his wife, together with my father, mother, sister, and myself, set out for the tented grove. It was a little after sunrise when we arrived within hearing of the mingled sounds of prayer and praise which ascended from different parts of the encampment. Probably it was a time when a large number of the friends on the ground were engaged in family devotion. Such a combination of voices sounded strangely in our ears. The man who was with us, a stout, athletic farmer, when inquired of, whether the peculiar appearance of his countenance arose from fear, acknowledged that he *was* a little frightened. We soon ventured within the inclosure of the

tents, and shortly met with some Christian friends, whose kindness tended much to make us feel at home. About ten o'clock A. M. the congregation was called to the stand, and I listened to the first sermon which I ever heard at a camp meeting. It was from these words: "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." In the afternoon another minister preached from this passage: "As for this sect, we know it is everywhere spoken against." In the evening another spoke from these words: "One thing I know, whereas I was once blind, now I see." These three ministers now slumber in the silent tomb, and no doubt a large proportion of the vast assembly who listened to them on that occasion have also gone to the eternal world. Earnest were the prayers of Christians, and great the joy which many of them experienced at that meeting, while many professed to find the Saviour's love. On Friday morning the last sermon at this meeting was preached from these words: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." This discourse was delivered with great solemnity by a minister who is still living, Rev. Aaron Hunt. He was then the presiding elder of a neighboring district. This was the first time that I

ever saw him. Little did I think when a child nine years old, listening to that sermon, that thirteen years afterward he would give his vote to license *me* as a preacher of the gospel. Mr. H. told me at the session of the New-York Conference in 1845, that Long Island was his first circuit, and that he traveled in company with Dr. W. Phœbus, having been called out by the presiding elder, probably in the year 1790. Long Island was then but one circuit, and their only preaching place in Brooklyn was a private dwelling. Now there are five or six Methodist churches in that city, and there are thirty-two traveling preachers laboring on Long Island. But to return. After singing a farewell hymn from the stand, the camp meeting closed, and we returned home. Twelve years elapsed before I went to another: not that I lacked the inclination, but circumstances rendered it impracticable.

Mr. Candee, one of our circuit preachers, was a man in feeble health, and such was the nature of his complaint that it affected his nerves, and made him think that he was more feeble, and his situation more dangerous, than was really the case. In short, he was greatly afflicted with hypochondria; yet, when he could be prevailed upon to preach, he was generally very fer-

vent, and I believe often successful in winning souls to Christ. It was either in consequence of his illness, or because he was called elsewhere, that a young man was sent to the circuit by the presiding elder, to labor with Mr. Hibbard. This young man was Arnold Scholefield, who afterward became eminently acceptable and useful. Indeed, during the three months which he was employed on that circuit, he was much beloved by the people. I recollect that on a sabbath morning, (when he had sat down at my father's table to breakfast,) in religious conversation, my father and Mr. S. soon became so happy as to prevent them from eating their breakfast. But I may speak of him more hereafter.

It was about this time that my father had a very extraordinary exercise of mind, which occurred one evening, and which had a most powerful and singular effect on his body. Father Hibbard preached that evening, at my father's house. After the sermon, a class meeting was held, in which the power of God fell upon my father in a wonderful manner. He had long desired, I believe, to obtain the blessing of entire sanctification, and that evening he thought he received it. He fell from the chair upon the floor, and, for a time, the struggle appeared to

be severe ; but he did not seek in vain. Yet he was assailed by some distressing temptations shortly afterward, and it is possible that he, for a time, lost the blessing which he then received : but I trust that he afterward regained it ; and I hope that he is now rejoicing in a world of unchangeable holiness. In the spring of 1810, Nathan Emery and John Russell were sent to the Reading circuit, which included the place where my father resided. The former is now living, (1846,) I believe, in Ohio, and Mr. Russell is, I trust, living in paradise. He was the son of the pious and venerable Abraham Russell, of New-York, who was long known as a liberal and useful member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the time when John entered the ministry, in the year 1810, his father was in wealthy circumstances ; and the privations of the itinerant were then probably far greater than they are at present. But John cheerfully consented to forego all the comforts of a kind father's house, and went forth among strangers to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to lead sinners to God. He was very kind and affectionate, and at the same time serious and studious. I well remember that the first copy of any part of Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary which I ever saw, was brought

to my father's house by Mr. R. I was then between ten and eleven years of age, and was very thankful for the privilege of reading it occasionally. At one time, when he laid it down to step out of the room, I became so interested in it, that when he returned I forgot that he might want it, until he, in a very gentle manner, asked me for it. The preachers who preached at my father's house commonly spent the night and a part of two days with us; and I looked forward with much interest to the appointed time for Mr. R. to arrive, that I might have a glimpse now and then at his Commentary. But his season of toil and trial was short. It was only about two years after he left Reading circuit, when he was called to his heavenly home.

During this conference year, the Lord graciously revived his work in our neighborhood, and my father's house was honored with the awakening and conversion of souls. At one time, when Mr. Emery preached, the Rev. David Austin,* who was at the time preaching in that vicinity, gave an exhortation after the sermon, and then Mr. E. kneeled down to offer the con-

* This minister was celebrated for his talents, eloquence, zeal, and eccentricities. He labored among the Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

cluding prayer. During this prayer, one or two individuals began to cry for mercy, and the meeting was changed into a prayer meeting, and it was a season long to be remembered.

Among the instruments employed by the Lord in this revival was Thomas Thorp, at that time a young school teacher, who commenced teaching a district school, in our neighborhood, where I received instruction. When a thoughtless young man, he was awakened through the personal conversation of Rev. M. Richardson, then just commencing his ministerial career. Lodging one night in the same room with him, Mr. R. invited the youth to Christ. Mr. T. was pious, labored zealously for his God, and I believe received license to exhort a few weeks after he came to our neighborhood ; and, within two years from that time, he was licensed to preach, and admitted into the traveling connection. He made rapid advancement in the studies suitable to a young minister, and became, in a very few years, a very acceptable preacher. In 1818 he was stationed in the city of New-York, and in 1819 he died.

Another young man, an exhorter, who frequently held meetings at my father's house in those days, was Alfred Bronson, who has since been a presiding elder in a western conference,

and has labored as a missionary in the far northwest. In the spring of 1811 our circuit was made a six-weeks' circuit, and A. Hunt, O. Sykes, and J. Reynolds, were appointed as our preachers. Although thirty-four years have passed away since that time, and multitudes of our ministers have gone into the eternal world, these three fathers in Israel are still living, and all of them yet able occasionally to preach Jesus to their fellow-men.* This year I was led to seek for more religion. The holy, prayerful example of one of those ministers, especially, was rendered a means of exciting a strong desire for higher degrees of holiness. Some seasons of social prayer, which he and my dear parents enjoyed in my father's house, will long remain fresh in my recollection. Our presiding elder at this time was William Anson, who had traveled on our circuit (Reading) a few years before, and whose memory was dear to many in our vicinity. The remarks which I heard from those who had known him, made me anxious to hear him. This opportunity I enjoyed at length, at a quarterly meeting held in the new meeting-house in Weston, which had been erected in the place of "*Lee Chapel*," to which

* Since the above was written, Mr. Reynolds has been suddenly called to his reward.

allusion has already been made. Whenever I had been to quarterly meeting before, I only enjoyed the privileges of the sabbath; but on this occasion I went on Saturday, heard the sermon, and went to one of the prayer meetings on Saturday evening. In those days "many came from far," on these occasions; sometimes, perhaps one or two hundred persons from other parts of the circuit were entertained on Saturday night among the friends in the place where the quarterly meeting was held. The prayer meetings were generally held at from three to six different places on the Saturday evening, and sometimes were seasons of great interest and mercy. In the love-feast, on sabbath morning, it was quite common to hear several individuals speak, with glad hearts and streaming eyes, of the blessings conferred on them in the meetings of the previous evening. The distance of most of the quarterly meetings from my father's house made it inconvenient for me to attend very often, and the privilege was embraced with great avidity whenever it was practicable. In the early part of the summer of 1812 new preachers were sent to the circuit. Their names were Seth Crowell, Coles Carpenter, and Gilbert Lyon. Mr. Crowell, I have already mentioned, as being the first min-

ister of the Methodist Church that I ever saw. Great was my joy when I heard that he was appointed to our circuit, and the sermons which I heard from him made a deep impression on my mind. Some of the texts from which he preached were these:—Matt. xxv, 46; 1 John v, 4; Isa. lxvi, 6; and Psa. cxix, 1. But such was the feeble state of his nervous system, through the severe labors and exposure of former years, that he was not able to perform a great amount of labor during the year. It was delightful to me to listen to his narratives of scenes through which he had passed, when preaching Jesus in the wilds of Canada. I distinctly remember one evening, which was chiefly occupied in relating his travels, trials, and successes in the ministry. Just before retiring to rest, he turned to me, who was the youngest person present, and addressed a few words of religious conversation, which immediately melted my heart, and I burst into tears. How much good might ministers do, by speaking in a friendly manner, personally, to the children in the families where they visit! From the lips of Mr. Crowell I received the first information concerning that holy man of God, H. C. Wooster, who had preceded Mr. C. as a missionary in Canada, and whose name

among that people "was as ointment poured forth."

One of his colleagues, Mr. Carpenter, was much younger in the ministry than Mr. Crowell; but they have both gone to the eternal world, and I fully believe to the home of the blessed. Mr. Carpenter was very pathetic and impressive in exhortation and in hortatory discourses, but seldom took up those controverted topics which were so ably handled by his senior colleague. Neither did he, like him, frequently pour out the terrors of the law in overwhelming torrents upon the unconverted, being rather a "son of consolation," than a "son of thunder." Some of his descriptions of the glories and joys of the heavenly land are still so distinctly remembered by me, that I can almost fancy that I hear his melodious voice yet sounding in my ears. God grant that I and my family, with every member of his family, may meet him in that "land of pure delight."

Before the conference year had closed, the health of Mr. Crowell became so impaired, that the presiding elder of the district thought proper to employ Jabez Tredwell, a worthy young local preacher, to fill his place. He was warm in his Master's cause, and labored very acceptably on the circuit till conference. Then he

was received as a probationer in the itinerancy, and appointed to a circuit in the Genesee Conference. During his second year of labor he was attacked with disease, and died, shouting "Glory to God." This was the happy and glorious end of one who sought the Lord and obtained mercy when he was about seven years old, and I believe continued faithful through the whole course of his pilgrimage. May the youth, who read this account, seek the Lord *now* in the morning of life.

The presiding elder who employed Mr. Tredwell to fill the vacancy on the circuit was the Rev. Elijah Woolsey, who is still living, waiting for a call to go and join those who have gone before him to the land of rest. I believe Mr. Woolsey, when he traveled on Reading circuit, some years before, was the instrument of the awakening of Mr. Tredwell's mother.

In the spring of 1813 A. Hunt was sent to our circuit again, and with him an old soldier of the cross, who is still living, by the name of Henry Eames. He was the son of an Irish Methodist, who immigrated to America, I believe, before the Revolution, and who was acquainted, in Ireland, with Mr. Wesley. A letter to him from Mr. W. is to be found in Wesley's Works, vol. vii, p. 99. I remember to have seen the

old man with his white locks, in 1811, rise in a love-feast, which was held in a barn, to witness for the Saviour whom he loved. If I mistake not, his son Henry was converted when about twelve years old, and commenced his labors as an itinerant minister in the year 1800. This minister had recently lost, by death, a pious, useful, and beloved companion. In subsequent years, while traveling in sections of country where they formerly resided, I have often heard her piety, prayers, and efforts for the salvation of souls, spoken of with gratitude. Her bereaved husband often carried copies of her religious letters to her friends with him, and read them to the families where he was entertained. Thus, "being dead she yet" spoke to many whom she had never seen on earth, some of whom, however, love to think of meeting her in glory. To encourage pious parents to pray for the conversion and usefulness of their children, and to comfort those who may be called by death away from their children, while they are yet young, I will observe, that a dear son of Mrs. E., who was but twelve or fourteen years of age when his mother died, is, and has been for many years, a useful minister of the Troy Conference.

In this year (1813) I first saw and heard a

minister, who is still living, and whose influence has been extensively felt in our church, I mean Nathan Bangs. An aged sister by the name of Wells, who lived about eight miles from my father's, (and who was one of those persons who composed the first class formed by Jesse Lee after commencing his labors in New-England,) was visiting at our house, just after conference, and mentioned that our new presiding elder, brother Bangs, was a good little boy when she knew him in the days of his childhood. When I first saw him, it was at a love-feast held in Josiah Gregory's barn, in Poplar Plains. My curiosity had been much excited by the conversation of Mrs. Wells, and my first feeling, when he commenced reading the hymn, was one of disappointment on account of the lowness of his voice. I feared he would not be able to make us hear the whole of his discourse. But my fears were soon removed. The love-feast was good, and, after it closed, the congregation adjourned to a grove near by, on a gentle declivity. A large farm wagon served as a pulpit, and the presiding elder preached from, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. We *felt* as well as heard the word of truth. After the sermon was closed, a venerable man arose and read the hymn,

“Of Him who did salvation bring,
I could for ever think and sing.”

His countenance was florid, and his voice and enunciation were somewhat peculiar. But there was something heavenly in his manner and appearance. He was an English Methodist preacher of the name of Blagborne, who spent two or three years laboring in America. He preached a good sermon from 1 John ii, 2, and presented our great Advocate in a most impressive manner to our view. He returned to England, and in a few years died suddenly, and no doubt went to rest. In the fifteenth chapter of that excellent biography, “The Life of Bramwell,” we find him making this remark, just before his own sudden death: “O the blessed—blessed state of that holy man of God, Mr. Blagborne, when he was about to depart. I saw him in London a short time prior to his death, when he exclaimed, with great joy, ‘Glory, glory be to God, who hath made me fully ready for my change!’” How desirable for all is such a state of mind!

Among the books which I read about this time was Law’s *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, which very deeply impressed my mind with a sense of the importance of being continually devoted to God, and of laboring to be as holy as

I possibly could. Having been informed that this book was very useful to Mr. Wesley when young, I perused it with great attention, and I trust with profit. This book of itself, however, would not have set before me as clearly as was necessary the privilege of a full salvation by faith in Christ. Two other publications, which fell into my hands about this time, were well calculated to present that blessed privilege. These were Mr. Fletcher's Last Check to Antinomianism, and particularly his address to imperfect believers, and the letters of that holy woman, Mrs. Hester A. Rogers. The former of these books was kindly lent to me by our preacher, brother Eames, and the latter was lent to my dear mother, by another pious friend. She had long been seeking perfect love with great earnestness, and, through the blessing of God upon this little book, was enabled to take hold, by faith, on the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel. Did not that circumstance heighten the joy and increase the fellowship of Mrs. Rogers and my mother when they met, (as we trust they have met,) in the fields of the blessed?

My own soul was led to seek earnestly, and pray much, for the blessing of entire sanctification, and I endeavored to seek it by faith. And

although I was but a youth, not quite fourteen years old, I cannot help thinking that then I was enabled to love God with all my heart, and though the blessing which I received was retained in its fullness but a very short season at that time, yet its remembrance is precious to my soul. I fear that during the greater part of the time since then I have loved God but imperfectly ; but I am thankful for that renewing and restoration which at different times I have received through faith in the blood of the covenant. I should have said that not long previous to these exercises my mind had been strongly tempted to the love of money, and various schemes had presented themselves to me for the future acquisition of wealth. And I felt sensibly that my heart was too prone to depart from the living God. Had it not been for the restraining grace and kind providence of God, I know not how far I might have been led into sins resulting from avarice. I feel that in this respect, as well as in others, I am greatly indebted to grace.

In those days, also, I found it necessary to watch against the amusements of youth, which had a tendency to draw my heart away from God. Some of Mr. Wesley's remarks on the subject of amusements, particularly in his ser-

mon on the "more excellent way," were very useful to me. In 1814 Ebenezer Washburn and Reuben Harris came on our circuit to labor. The former has, within a few years, given several interesting reminiscences of his life to the readers of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*; and though he has removed far west to the Wisconsin Territory, he still lives in the warm affections of many, very many, of his Christian friends in the Atlantic states. May his old age be sweetened by the presence of God and the kindness of man! Brother Harris also removed to Ohio a few years since, and died when on a journey in a part of the state remote from his residence, having preached his last sermon (but a few days before his death) among strangers, on this text:—"Let us go on to perfection."

In the course of the year some difficulty arose between my father and another class-leader in the society, which had an unfavorable influence on my father's mind, in some degree, for several years. This was a cause of grief to his family, to the preachers, and to his brethren and sisters generally. At one time he told me that he thought he should withdraw from the Methodist Church, but did not speak of uniting with any other. This grieved my heart, and I used the strongest arguments I could to

prevent such a step, and I thank God that step was never taken. My dear father lived twelve years longer, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church : many happy meetings were held under his roof during that time ; and at length I heard him praise God on his dying bed. How many have rashly cut themselves off from the society of the church, to their great injury ! The brother with whom he differed, I thought, was a good man ; but if Satan could have led two good men into such a controversy as would have led to the separation of one or both of them from the church, his malicious designs would have been accomplished, especially, if either of them had lost his soul through his folly.

This year, a good man by the name of Moses Betts was appointed leader of our class. He was rather prone to doubts and fears, but the example which he set us of steadfastness in duty, and attendance upon the means of grace, together with the advice which he gave me, shed a beneficial influence on my mind. After faithfully performing his duty as a class-leader, amidst several discouraging circumstances, for nearly four years, he was called from the field of toil on earth to the heavenly rest above.

The house of Peter Jennings, about two miles from my residence, was a place where the society

often met to worship God, there being no Methodist church at that time within seven miles of us. In brother Jennings' house I was often blessed, both in hearing the word preached on week evenings, (and occasionally on the sabbath,) and often in the prayer meetings and class meetings, which were frequently held on the holy day of the Lord. It may interest some persons to learn that, in many parts of my native state, it was customary to have two public services in the daytime on the sabbath, in the same house, even in small country places where the members were few and scattering. In this respect the Methodists there differ in their usages from many of their brethren in the adjoining state of New-York. In several instances, our ministers, who had labored on circuits in the state of New-York, when they came into Connecticut, endeavored to introduce the practice there of having a morning sermon in one society, and then going on to preach in another place three, four, or six miles distant, in the afternoon. These efforts were not made from a regard to their own convenience, for it required more toil: and it is not very pleasant, in a hot summer's day, or in a cold winter's day, after the labor of the morning service, (often including a class meeting,) to ride half a dozen miles

to preach again. But their object was to meet as many of the pressing calls for *sabbath preaching* as they could. But these efforts to change the custom of the dwellers in the land of *steady habits* were not generally very successful. In many cases the people said they would prefer "*all-day preaching*," as they called it, once in four or even six weeks, to "*half-day preaching*" once in two weeks. It was quite common, in many places, for those who resided two or three miles from the place of worship to carry with them some articles of light food, which they ate between the morning and afternoon meetings, instead of returning home to dinner. Often would you see the husband and son approaching the basket of the good wife and kind mother to receive a supply from the eatables which she had brought with her; while others drew from their own pockets those supplies which they needed for present use. It was my custom to feed the mind, by reading, as well as the body, during those *intermissions*, as they were termed.

It was at brother Jennings' house that I first saw a volume of the Dictionary of the Bible, and its contents, as far as opportunity permitted, I devoured with avidity. The historical facts and information in ancient geography, which I there found, were peculiarly interesting. Some

difficult passages of Scripture were also explained to my satisfaction. But, ah! there is always a *but* to everything earthly—this was but half the Dictionary; hence, the remarks on the words beginning with the first half of the letters of the alphabet were not to be found here. But I made the best of what there was. The privilege of looking into this book was, for a time, confined to an hour or two of one day of the week. Great was my joy when told by a young man of my acquaintance, that brother J. had said that he was willing to lend me the book if I wished to borrow it. Without hesitation I accepted the kind offer, bore home my prize, and to this day retain a lively and grateful sense of the kindness of the lender.

It was at his house, and in one of those sabbath *intermissions*, that I first perused the delightful narrative of *The Dairyman's Daughter*, which drew tears from my eyes, (as I doubt not it has from the eyes of tens of thousands,) and led me to read other productions of the same writer.

Through the kindness of brother J. and his family, I enjoyed, in the same way, the first opportunity which I ever had of reading N. Bangs' book, entitled "Errors of Hopkinsianism," and some other books, which made a deep impres-

sion on my mind. Though I had discontinued attending school, yet my love of study remained; and when a social library was established, about two miles from my father's, I eagerly desired to be a proprietor; but this was not my lot. I often think of the great privileges enjoyed at the present day by the youth in every school district in the great state of New-York. Had I enjoyed access to such a library as may now be found in almost every neighborhood, and been permitted to read the books without money or price, it seems to me that I should have been exceedingly thankful. Of novels I have read scarcely any; but I have seen enough of them to be satisfied that time may be employed to better purpose than in reading them.

Near the close of this conference year (1814-15) a glorious revival of religion took place in the town of Reading. Numbers were powerfully converted to God; and, in the love-feast of the last quarterly meeting held that year, I had the privilege of hearing the testimonies and shouts of several of the young converts, one of whom is now, and has been for years, a faithful minister in the New-York Conference.

In 1815 Elijah Woolsey (who had been our presiding elder three years before) was placed

in charge of our circuit. Not having had an opportunity of hearing him while he was our presiding elder, I greatly desired to see and hear him when he commenced his labors among us as a circuit preacher. The first sermon which I heard him preach pleased and profited me much, and I think that I grew in grace more that year than in several other years of my life. The anecdotes which he related in his preaching, mostly circumstances which occurred under his own observation, were calculated to illustrate the goodness, power, and wisdom of God, as well as the workings of human nature. He commenced his labors as an itinerant Methodist preacher in the year 1793, and spent some time in the wilds of Canada, preaching Jesus to poor sinners. Many miles have I traveled, and sometimes through mud and snow, to hear this servant of the Lord publish his Master's gospel. Two things I always expected when I went to hear him. First, to find the meeting begun at an early hour; and secondly, that the meeting would be dismissed in good season, so that I could walk home before a late hour in the night, even when I had three miles or more to walk.

This year I obtained access to the Life of Benjamin Abbott. I once heard one of our

bishops (whose mother was awakened under Mr. Abbott's ministry) observe, that though he was a rough, untutored child of nature, yet he possessed so much good common sense, and so much of the power of the Holy Ghost, that he was very useful in the vineyard of the Lord. This simple narrative was a means of exciting me to greater earnestness in the cause of God. And the fact that our minister, brother Woolsey, had been personally acquainted with father A., and confirmed the favorable opinion I had formed of him from reading his book, tended to make the book itself still more useful to me. "The Portraiture of Methodism" fell into my hands about this time, and I was much interested in reading it, especially the biographical notices which I found in it. "The Experience of several Methodist Preachers," written by themselves, at Mr. Wesley's request, was also profitable to my soul. Scarcely any kind of religious books have had so much effect on my heart and conscience as religious biography. In consequence of this, I have been more ready to devote a portion of my time to writing a narrative of the dealings of God with me: for I have observed that even some narratives which were written without any elegance of style, and which did not contain any very remarkable events, were, nevertheless,

rendered the means, in the Lord's hand, of much benefit to me in spiritual things.

In the course of this year I was somewhat exercised on the subject of a call to the ministry. Some impressions on my mind led me to think that it *might* be my duty, after the lapse of a few years, to stand up as an ambassador of Jesus. But from my earliest childhood I had been afflicted with an impediment in my speech. I had a cleft palate, and the deficiency was so great that my voice sounded unpleasantly to strangers, besides rendering the language hard to be understood by persons not familiar with the sound. Although when a lad not more than nine years of age, I had occasionally prayed in small social circles, when called upon to do so, and once, by request of my teacher, had prayed with the school which I attended, yet it was very rarely that I had taken any part, vocally, in the social meetings of the friends. I excused myself from following some strong impressions concerning duty, by referring, in my own mind, to this unavoidable defect in my power of articulation. This consideration led me to dismiss, as much as possible, the idea of preaching.

About this time a young woman, eminently pious, removed from Ohio to Wilton, a few miles distant from our residence. Her name

was Rebecca Noyes, and although she had been very fond of gay and costly apparel, yet, after she turned to the Lord, she was emphatically "clothed with humility." She was not beautiful in the usual acceptation of the term, but her countenance, when lighted up with holy animation, seemed almost angelic. Her testimonies for her Lord in the love-feast, and in the *general prayer meetings*, (in which two or three adjacent societies met together,) were often attended with a powerful and divine influence. I have seen unconverted persons, who were entire strangers to her, melted into tears, in a very few minutes after she commenced speaking or praying. I will here say that she continued faithful, holy, and useful, after her marriage, as well as before, till her triumphant death, about the year 1826. Her Christian course was through great tribulation; but now, I have no doubt, she rejoices with them who "stand before the throne." Her name after her marriage was Mrs. Lobdell, and an interesting account of this holy woman may be found in the *Methodist Magazine*, vol. x, p. 192.

In 1816 Samuel Bushnell was appointed to succeed Mr. Woolsey in the charge of Reading circuit. There was a great contrast in the natural temperament of these good men; Mr. W.

being remarkably easy and affable in his manners, in conversation, and animated in his delivery from the beginning of his sermons to the end; while the other was reserved in his intercourse, and slow in the delivery of his public discourses, with but little gesticulation, and scarcely none at all in the former part of his sermon. Some of us were not so well pleased with him at first as we could wish, but before he had completed the term of two years among us, he was very highly esteemed by many. A few short years of labor after he left our circuit terminated his toil.

During this year I was first favored with an opportunity of seeing that eminent servant of the Lord, Samuel Merwin, whose melodious, yet powerful voice, impressive enunciation, and manly form, are still fresh in my recollection. It was at a quarterly meeting in Norwalk, in the first Methodist church ever built in that town, before the church was finished, that I heard him preach for the first time, and it seems but as yesterday, though thirty years have since rolled away. For many years that "house of prayer" has been superseded by another, and Samuel Merwin has gone to the home of Christian pilgrims above. A single remark which Mr. M. made in that love-feast I will record.

When a blind brother had said, among other things, "Brethren, though I cannot see you, yet by faith I can see Jesus," and then took his seat, the good minister (looking at him very affectionately) observed: "In the resurrection, my brother, you will see as well as any of us." It might have been at the same quarterly meeting that he made the following remark: "When I was stationed in Albany," said he, "I sometimes went into the capitol, and was respectfully invited to a comfortable seat by some member or officer of the house, and listened for a time to the speeches of the learned and able gentlemen engaged in the debate, but I soon grew weary and uninterested, took my hat and retired. But," said he, "I go from one quarterly meeting to another; every sabbath I am in a love-feast, where I hear men, women, and youth, most of whom make no pretension to eloquence or learning, speak in artless language, or broken accents, of God's goodness to them, and it is still interesting, affecting, and, as it were, new to me every sabbath." And often did his expressive countenance show plainly the deep feeling of his heart in listening to the simple testimony of the humble, illiterate child of God. In the course of my travels in different sections of the country, I have met with several of the spiritual

children of Mr. M.; and if these pages should meet the eyes of any of them, let me entreat them to remember "how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of *them* as a father doth his children, that *they* would walk worthy of God who hath called *them* to his kingdom and glory." And it may be possible that this brief notice of the departed ambassador of Christ may be read by an unconverted person who will remember the solemn warnings of Samuel Merwin. If this should be the case, it is my prayer that God would make it the means of leading that person to follow the advice of him who "being dead yet speaketh." I shall have occasion to mention the kindness of this father in Israel, in a subsequent part of my narrative. In Dr. Bangs' History, vol. iv, p. 304, may be found an interesting account of him.

This year (1816) I saw a religious newspaper for the first time. I had seen magazines and monthly religious publications, containing accounts of revivals, as well as essays and discussions on different subjects, but a weekly publication, devoted chiefly to religious intelligence, I had never seen before. This paper was the Religious Intelligencer, published by Nathan Whiting, at New-Haven, Connecticut. He was a Congregationalist, and some of the articles

which it contained were not exactly suited to my taste, but many other articles which I found were exceedingly interesting and useful to me. The missionary intelligence, especially, gave me enlarged views of the necessity of efforts for the conversion of the world. My mind had been somewhat deeply impressed with this subject, not long before, in reading the journal and letters of Harriet Newell; but the weekly paper had a tendency to increase my sense of the importance of giving and laboring for the salvation of the heathen. In less than thirty years how greatly have religious newspapers been multiplied! What multitudes of them are now circulated through the length and breadth of our land! And although it must be admitted that some harm has been done by improper articles in some of them, yet I am fully satisfied that multitudes are quickened in their religious course, and stirred up to greater diligence by these weekly messengers of mercy. The Christian may be situated in such a place that he may feel as Elijah did, when he exclaimed, "They have thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." But when the religious newspaper is brought in, he finds in it an account of a revival in a far

distant place, where he once resided, or under the labors of a minister with whom he was once conversant, perhaps one whom he encouraged to enter the ministry, and he exclaims, with a tear of joy glistening in his eye, "God hath not forsaken us in our bondage."

While on this subject, let me briefly address the editors of religious papers, the persons who write articles for publication in them, and those who *might* write useful communications, but do not. Do the latter consider that to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin? But perhaps they say, Our communications may not be as useful as the compositions of others. Let them consider that the editors are expected to select the most useful, and when they shall find, by experiment, that their communications are generally rejected, it will be time enough to refrain from writing short articles for the periodical religious press. To those who *do* write, let me say, Your responsibility to God is great. Do not write in a careless, indolent, lazy manner. Whatever your mental energies are, consecrate them to God; and use them in the best possible manner for the good of immortal souls. Some idea, recorded by your pen, may be accompanied by God's blessing to the hearts of individuals whom you

never will see till you meet them in a better world ; and there you may rejoice that your labor has not been in vain in the Lord. To writers for, and editors of, religious papers, I would respectfully say, Never let literary ambition, personal resentment, pecuniary interest, or party feeling, lead you to write any article when you have reason to believe you might write something else which would tend more to promote the glory of God and the good of man.

About this time I felt strong impressions that it was my duty to converse personally with several of my fellow-men on the subject of their souls' salvation : but fearing that I might do harm rather than good, I shrunk from the cross in most instances. Whether this was the cause of the severe trials of mind through which I passed in the winter of 1816-17, I cannot certainly tell ; but I have often thought, while reviewing the scenes of that melancholy season, that a more faithful compliance with the apostle's direction—" Do good to all men "—would have been attended with a greater degree of strength to endure mental trials. But during several weeks my mind was frequently in great heaviness, through manifold temptations, so that at times I feared that I had never known the joys of true religion. At one time I went to hear

Mr. Bushnell preach ; and after the sermon the little class were invited to tarry, as usual, for class meeting. I told Mr. B. in the class meeting that I felt as if I was traveling through the wilderness ; it seemed as if the fiery flying serpents were all around me. By this I meant that the tempter harassed me with most tormenting fears. The good man understood my meaning, and, by language which I shall never forget, encouraged me to trust in the Saviour. "Sometimes," said he, "the tempted Christian is like a man in a pit, from which he cannot effect his escape, till a friend appears on the brink, and lets down a rope or chain to the sufferer ; he takes hold of it, but, as his friend begins to draw him up, he trembles, and exclaims, 'I'm afraid you will let me drop.' 'Hold on,' is the reply, 'and I will draw you out.'" This went to my heart with great power ; and often have those words occurred to my mind in subsequent trials many years after Mr. B. had been called to rest in Abraham's bosom.

At another time, when I was almost persuaded to believe that I had been irrevocably doomed to perdition before I had a being, and when my desponding feelings had begun to benumb my soul, these words were applied most powerfully to my heart :—"God so loved the world,

that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Did God love the *world*?" thought I: "ah! surely I am one of that world of lost sinners whom God loved. It must be that he is really willing to save me. There can be no dire necessity of my eternal ruin." O how my heart melted within me in view of this blessed passage of holy writ! But it was some time before I was enabled to rejoice again in constant steadfast hope of the glory of God. In view of the mercy which carried me through that season of temptation, I can say, The Lord hath helped me.

In the spring of 1817 the fourth quarterly meeting of the conference year was held in Reading. This was the last year of Rev. N. Bangs' presidency in the district, and of course it was, for the present at least, the last quarterly meeting on the circuit at which we expected to enjoy his labors. Through the rain, which fell plentifully on Saturday, my brother and myself went to the place of meeting, but found a stranger preaching when we entered the house. He was a man apparently about fifty years of age, and, if I rightly recollect, stout built, thick set, with long, flowing hair, and heavy eyebrows, and very plain in his dress,

and humble in his appearance. Perhaps it was the smallness of his eyes, which were deeply set in his head, that led me at first to suppose him a blind man. I soon perceived him to be a very pathetic preacher, and one who was filled with the Holy Ghost. Some of the people of God wept, and some shouted. The text appeared to be the latter part of the Lord's prayer, and the peculiar, earnest manner in which he uttered the word "glory," while dwelling upon the latter part of the text, was very striking:—"Now, dear brethren," said he, as he put up a finger to each eye, apparently to wipe away a tear or two, "you will permit me to stop and give God *glory*." My heart was melted, as well as the hearts of others, under the powerful appeals of this man of God. The Rev. A. Hunt, who lived near the church, fell in company with me after the close of the service, as he walked home. Knowing his affability, I inquired the name of the minister who had preached to us. "That was Bishop George," was his reply. Of this I had not the remotest idea before; but I was highly delighted to find that, although Asbury was dead, yet the church had been enabled to select as a successor one so apostolic in his spirit, and so earnest in his Master's work.

On the next morning, which was clear and

beautiful, I went to the love-feast: the good bishop was there; and, what seemed remarkable to me, did not, to my recollection, open his eyes from the time the brethren commenced speaking till the last one had spoken. With his head resting against a pillar, he continued silent, and almost motionless, during the whole of that time: but doubtless his heart was lifted up to God in prayer and praise, for, when the love-feast was closed, and he ascended the pulpit and commenced the public services, he spoke like a man anointed from on high. His sermon on sabbath was equally impressive with the one preached on the day previous. Near the close of his discourse he made a most touching allusion to the dying words of Jesse Lee, who had a few months before closed his life in Virginia.

In the place where we were worshipping the second class of Methodists in New-England was formed by Mr. Lee, about twenty-seven years previous. The first male member of that class (Rev. A. Sandford) was present, and several others who had been added to the church soon after Mr. S., besides many who had heard their parents and friends speak affectionately of Mr. Lee. And when the bishop repeated the following expression of the good man on his death.

bed:—"Tell all my old friends that I am going to glory,"* the whole congregation seemed to be moved as trees by a mighty wind. I took up this morning† an old magazine of October, 1828, and accidentally opened to the account of the death of Bishop George, written a short time after it occurred. Truly, the same blessed Jesus who was with one, went with the other of these holy men through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Other circumstances concerning this good man may be mentioned hereafter.

This unpretending narrative may be read by some lover of Christ, and of public worship, who may be providentially detained from the house of prayer, while the rest of the family have gone to the house of the Lord. Let me say to such, this was several times the case with me in the years 1814-15-16-17. It was always a great trial to me to be thus situated, even for a single sabbath; but I have often found, in such circumstances, the Lord was able and willing to bless my soul abundantly. And I must be permitted to hope that this statement may encourage such a person to look unto Him who

* If my recollection be correct, these were the words which the bishop repeated.

† April 28, 1846.

“Resides everywhere,
And can in all places give answer to prayer.”

I believe it was in the latter part of the year 1817 that a superannuated preacher, by the name of James Coleman, first preached at my father's house. His deep piety and simplicity pleased me; his recital of events and scenes which transpired in the early days of Methodism interested me; his preaching benefited me; and his testimony of the goodness of God to his own soul incited me to press after higher attainments in the divine life. Notwithstanding, he had, perhaps unfortunately, acquired a habit of making frequent long pauses between sentences in the commencement of his sermon. When I first heard the good man preach I was alarmed at these pauses, fearing that he was becoming so embarrassed that he would be constrained to stop entirely; but as he progressed he became more ready in his utterance, and my fears gave place to emotions of another kind. The subject of entire sanctification was one on which he delighted to dwell. He commenced his itinerant career in 1791, on a circuit near Pittsburgh, in a country which I suppose was then almost a wilderness. He spent a great part of his time, while he was able to travel, in those sections of the work where there was much labor and but

scanty support: but his work is with his God, and his reward is with the Most High.* Two or three years since he died in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and left a world of sorrow for the land of rest. May I meet his happy spirit in the realms above!

In the year 1818 my mind was much drawn out in prayer for the spread of pure religion, and I was often filled with astonishment at the indifference and inactivity of many professing Christians. In November, of that year, I went to visit a brother in the flesh, who resided twelve or fourteen miles from my father's house. A severe rain storm detained me two or three days longer than I expected. On the last evening which I spent there, one or two Christian friends came in: we united in prayer and praise: the Holy Ghost came down upon us, and I was more powerfully overwhelmed with a sense of the worth of immortal spirits than ever before. My brother's little son, sleeping

* A minister of another church in the state of ———, once said to Mr. C., "You Methodists can do nothing *here*; we have our colleges, academies, and regular parishes; you can do nothing *here*." Mr. C., rubbing his hands together, and looking upward, (as he often did in religious exercises,) replied, "*We believe in perseverance.*" He lived to see about 15,000 communicants in the M. E. Church in that small state.

in an adjoining room, hearing the strong cries which powerful emotions almost compelled me to pour forth, and awakened by the sound, was brought into the room to be quieted. The moment my eyes beheld him I felt such a spirit of prayer for the little child as I could not then express, and cannot now describe. That child gladdened the hearts of his praying parents by seeking religion about seven years after that time. He afterward became a minister, and has been for about twelve years preaching Jesus to his fellow-men. Next day I returned home, and began more frequently to take an active part in religious meetings. Occasionally I prayed in small social circles, and God blessed me, in some instances abundantly, in so doing, with a sense of his approbation. With much trembling I sometimes rose to speak a word of exhortation; and in this, too, I felt at times a very clear sense of God's presence; yet, as the apostle speaks against the use of an unknown tongue in the church, I remained silent in the house of prayer on account of my impediment: for, although I had good reason to believe that most of my words were understood by the greater part of those who were present, yet I feared I might occupy time that would be more usefully employed by others: and had not my brethren en-

couraged me, and frequently called on me to speak or pray, (though it was not customary for them to do so with regard to each other in general,) I might soon have relapsed into my former habits of silence. Whether it was a belief that my speaking would conduce to my own welfare, or because they thought it *might* be useful to others, or both, I cannot tell, but the encouragement which my feeble efforts received from the brethren in Greenfield and Greenfarms makes me feel very grateful to them even to this day. Some of those brethren and sisters are yet living, but several of them have gone to worship before the throne. Among the latter I must be permitted to mention the names of Bradford Craft, who was a local preacher, Peter Jennings, and his brother Joshua, all of precious memory, who, with others of their pious associates, have finished their course, and are now resting from their labors.

Wesley's Sermons were then printed in nine small volumes, one of which, and the Saints' Everlasting Rest, fell into my hands about this time, through the kindness of the owners, who lent them to me. The former contained discourses on our Lord's sermon on the mount, which deeply impressed my mind; and some portions of the latter powerfully excited me to

diligence in laboring to persuade my fellow-men to seek the "*everlasting rest*." Much good may be done merely by lending useful books; yet some object to this on account of the danger of losing them through the carelessness of borrowers. But if those who lend them would keep a little memorandum-book, and make a minute of every book lent, this might be in a great measure prevented.

In the early part of the year 1819 I was led to inquire whether it might not be my duty to offer my services to the church as an ambassador of Christ: but my unworthiness and insufficiency seemed too great to admit such a thought. I did not feel my mind so much drawn out to any particular mode of religious discourse, as I did to giving my whole time and energies to the work of recommending Jesus and his religion to my fellow-men. I passed through many seasons of painfully anxious deliberation on this subject, while my diffidence prevented me from opening my mind to any human being on the subject. My impressions of the duty of going from house to house, to warn and invite men, also returned upon me. Sometimes in my lonely walks of meditation in the fields by moonlight, or starlight, like Jeremiah, I exclaimed, "Ah! Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a

child." Yet I continued occasionally to open my mouth for the Lord, in short exhortations, and was blessed in so doing.

In the year 1820 Laban Clark and Phineas Cook traveled our circuit. I shall never forget the impressions made on my mind by a sermon preached by Mr. Cook from "The Lord will provide;" and another sermon by Mr. Clark, from 1 Thess. i, 5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." Under each of these sermons my heart was much affected, and I was encouraged to "trust in the Lord, and do good."

The Methodist Magazine, which was commenced in 1818, contained many articles which had a tendency to increase my zeal for the Lord. The "Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion in the Western Country," published in several successive numbers, were especially useful to me. I also formed an acquaintance with three young men, who, like myself, were striving to exhort sinners to come to Christ, and though they are now scattered abroad, and live far asunder from each other and from me, yet the happy seasons which we enjoyed are still fresh in my mind, and pleasing to my re-

collection. Their names are Stephen Remington, Moses Hill, and W. H. Dikeman.

Feeling a desire to hold meetings in some adjacent neighborhoods, where the door was open, and not wishing to go beyond the bounds of propriety as a private member of the church, I asked for license to exhort. It was one of the heaviest crosses which I ever took up in my life, to speak to the preacher in private on this subject. Nothing but a sense of duty could have induced me to do it. The request was, however, readily laid before the class, and, with their consent, Mr. Clark kindly signed my license. I endeavored to improve every opportunity to hold meetings, particularly in neighborhoods where others did not appoint religious meetings.

CHAPTER II.

THE AUTHOR A CLASS-LEADER, EXHORTER,
AND LOCAL PREACHER, 1821-1823.

NOT long after, the preacher called on me to take charge of our little class, as the leader wished to have a change made. This was a very heavy cross, as my father and mother were members of it; but I dared not refuse.

In the spring of 1821, at a quarterly conference, (the first which I ever attended,) my license to exhort was renewed by the Rev. E. Washburn, the presiding elder. When he inquired of me concerning my faith in the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I answered willingly in the affirmative; and when he particularized concerning some points, the preacher in charge, fearing, perhaps, that I might suppose the presiding elder was suspicious of my orthodoxy, observed to him, that he believed brother O. was a sound Methodist. The presiding elder smilingly replied, "He *was* a few years ago, *what there was of him*," alluding to the circumstance that I was but a young boy in 1814, when he was a preacher on the circuit. At that quarterly conference, also, the presiding elder urged very faithfully upon every exhorter

and leader present, the duty of laboring with all their might to do good. He also alluded to glorious revivals which were going on in some parts of the district, mentioning the name of Mr. Maffitt as having been very useful in some places. This minister has since been seen and heard in a great many different places in our country, but I think this was the first time I ever heard of him. In the summer following, I had, however, the privilege of hearing this remarkable man, in an "upper room," in the borough of Bridgeport, and of seeing, on that occasion, about fifty or sixty persons present themselves, at one time, for the prayers of the people of God.

About this time I met with an aged gentleman from Ireland who affirmed that he knew Adam Clarke when a boy, and lived near neighbor to his father. He related a circumstance, which, if true, (and perhaps it may be,) will interest the admirers of Dr. Clarke.* After Dr. C. had been long absent from Ireland, and had obtained great eminence, he made a journey thither, went to the house where he dwelt in the days of early youth, and made some in-

* If this be a correct statement, it probably happened in June, 1811. See Dr. Clarke's Life, book vii, pp. 140-142.

quiries about a particular room. The woman of the house, not suspecting him to be Dr. C., replied, "That room is said to be the room where the *great* Dr. Clarke used to say his prayers." The stranger proposed to enter, but the poor woman objected, probably because she thought it was not in decent condition for the gentleman to enter; but he urged his way in, fell upon his knees, and offered up fervent, vocal prayer to the Most High. When he arose, the woman was weeping, and the stranger then said, "He whom *you* call the *great* Dr. Clarke thinks very lowly of himself, and I am he."

In the years 1821 and 1822, I attended two camp meetings on the same ground, at what was then called Musketoe Cove, Long Island, about twenty miles from the city of New-York. With a number of others, I crossed over in a sloop to the camp ground, which was near the shore. Several circumstances occurred at these camp meetings which I distinctly remember, but cannot assign each one of them to the particular meeting at which it occurred, whether in 1821, or the following year. What I record, therefore, will be without making any particular distinction between the two meetings.

Here, for the first time, I saw Joshua Soule, since a bishop of the Methodist E. Church,

P. P. Sandford, who has recently been one of the book agents of our church, William Thacher, of whom I heard as a presiding elder when I was a little boy, and who took charge of the first camp meeting held north of the city of New-York, Heman Bangs, Marvin Richardson, Stephen Martindale, and Lewis Pease, all of whom have since been called, in different districts, to take charge of their brethren in the ministry, and one of whom (Mr. Pease) now sleeps in Jesus. Here, too, I first saw and heard John J. Matthias, who has repeatedly been called to act in the same important relation to the church, and William Ross, who soon after that meeting finished his work. Of those living I must be sparing of my remarks, however highly I may esteem them ; but of the departed I may speak with more freedom.

How pathetically did Mr. Pease, at one of those meetings, address us on the prayer of the publican, and with what solemnity did he preach at the other meeting, from the words of the Psalmist ! “In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture ; and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.” *Psa. lxxv, 8.*

Mr. Maffitt’s sermon, at one of those meet-

ings, was on the text ending with these words: "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." A powerful impression was made on the vast assembly, and, when the preacher sat down, brother Heman Bangs arose, and with a loud, but very solemn voice, exclaimed, "Glory to God." Pausing for a moment amid the responses of many in the congregation, he made the inquiry, "Why?" and then answering his own inquiry, he said, "Because these sinners are out of hell. Now there *is* one to deliver." Soon a large number of weeping mourners collected together to be prayed for by the people of God, and the scenes of that afternoon I shall not soon forget. After the lapse of years, I have met with different individuals, in places remote from each other, who have referred to that camp meeting as the place of their repentance and conversion. Here I saw, for the first time, that father in Israel, and veteran soldier in camp-meeting warfare, Joseph Smith, of New-York, who has since followed his pious son, Rev. John M. Smith, to the land of unending rest.

I also saw one of the good ministers whom I have mentioned so blessed at one of those camp meetings, that his bodily strength failed him, while he was on the stand; and many years

afterward, when in conversation with me, he said, "I never shall forget *that* blessed season." He now holds a very responsible place in the church, and has repeatedly filled a seat in her highest council. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," was the solemn text from which Rev. Mr. Ross addressed us in a most powerful manner. This was the first and only sermon which I ever heard him preach. In about two years from that time he went to his reward. I will observe, that but a few weeks after this, I heard that he had preached a sermon at a camp meeting in Connecticut, which was made the means, in the hands of God, of the awakening of a young woman, who went to that meeting without any special desires for religion, but found the Saviour before its close. That was the first camp meeting she ever attended, and at her first arrival she could hardly conceal her dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting, but prejudice gave way to conviction, and she returned home rejoicing. At that time I had never seen her, or heard of her, neither was I at that camp meeting; but some years afterward, through the providence of God, an acquaintance was formed, which resulted in our union for life, as fellow-travelers to Mount Zion.

But to return to the camp meeting on Long

Island. An interview occurred between brother N. W. Thomas and myself, which I communicated for publication in the Child's Magazine. As some may see this, who have not seen that, I will repeat it here. Mr. T. closed the exercises by prayer, at the stand, on the first evening after my arrival. I had not seen him since I was about nine years old, and now I was about twenty-one. I resolved to embrace the first opportunity of speaking to him, as he had often preached at my father's house. Perhaps it was the next day, that, seeing him standing near a tent, I ventured to approach him, and calling him by name, inquired if he recollected preaching at the house of Levi Osborn, in Greenfield, Conn., several years since. He told me that he did. I then inquired if he remembered his youngest son. "Yes," said he; "are you that little boy?" When told that I was, he threw his arms around my neck, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and expressed his surprise and gratification, to meet me in the land of the living, and on my way to glory.

On our return from one of these camp meetings, there were on board of the sloop some very gay, thoughtless young people, who appeared very unwilling that we should have religious exercises on board. But as this privilege

was usually granted to passengers going to, and returning from, camp meeting, we referred the matter to the captain, who gave his consent, and a very solemn, joyful meeting we had, as the vessel glided over the blue waters. Meantime our thoughtless friends seemed to eye us with a degree of contempt. One young man, especially, I noticed, who manifested much unwillingness to have religious exercises on board. We landed; he went his way, and I went to the house of prayer, where brother Craft preached, and wished me to exhort after him. But a young brother, who had found the Lord but a few months before, was so full of zeal that he arose immediately after the preacher sat down, and with a warm heart, and flowing tears, began to beseech sinners to turn to the Lord. Presently some of them began to weep; we soon commenced a prayer meeting, and three persons, who had not been to the camp meeting, found the Lord that evening. About two weeks after this, being at the place where I landed at our return from the camp meeting, a young man met me, and very kindly extended his hand; I soon perceived it was the young man who was so unwilling to have prayer, praise, and exhortation, on board of the sloop. Without waiting for me to make any inquiry, he joyfully

told me the good news, that he had met with a great change, and he now felt it to be a privilege, rather than a hardship, to unite with Christians in worshipping the God of love.

As my exercises on the subject of devoting myself to the work of the ministry continued, I ventured to mention it to brother L. Clark, the preacher in charge, who laid the case before the society, by whom I was recommended as a proper person to be licensed as a local preacher. The district conference, composed of all the local preachers in a presiding elder's district, was then in operation, having been but recently established by the authority of the General Conference. The district conference had authority to license such persons as local preachers as they thought proper, provided they were recommended by the society and the quarterly conference where they belonged. In the quarterly conference I was recommended to the district conference, which was to be held in February, 1822, at Burlington, Connecticut, about forty miles from Reading, where I was residing at this time, with my brother, who employed me for a few months in his shop. Rev. Hawly Sandford, a son of the Rev. Aaron Sandford, whom I have before mentioned, kindly consented to take me in his carriage. Accordingly, on

the morning of the first sabbath in February I started early, walked about three miles to brother Sandford's house, and went with him to a neighborhood in Newtown, where he had an appointment to preach two sermons that day. He was a local preacher, and had formerly been a traveling preacher, and still labored extensively. Perhaps he had as much influence as any other local preacher on the circuit. His conversation with me that morning was serious, friendly, and instructive. I had never formally preached, but he proposed to me to preach for him in the afternoon. Although almost entirely unacquainted with every person in the place, I dared not refuse, and at the close of the morning service he gave notice that I would preach in the afternoon. After a short intermission I preached from Mic. vi, 8, and felt thankful to God for that degree of liberty with which I was favored. We then went to the house of brother Newton Tuttle, a local preacher in the south part of Southbury, where brother S. had an appointment. On our way he requested me to preach in the evening, and again I had cause to thank the Lord that he did not forget me in my weakness. Next morning it snowed; but, as we were yet more than twenty miles from the place where the district conference was to meet, we slowly

pressed our way along, leaving an appointment for brother S. to preach in a place where there was no Methodist society, for the next Friday evening, when he returned. I now began to feel as though I was in a strange land, never having been so far from my father's house before, though I was not yet *very* far from home. We did not reach Burlington that day, on account of the snow, but went through Bethlehem, where we found brother Julius Field, a young traveling preacher, who was laboring on that circuit, and several local preachers on their way to the district conference. One of them preached that evening, and when he sat down I was (very unexpectedly to myself) called upon to exhort. At first I endeavored to excuse myself, but the importunity of the brethren prevailed. Next day we went to Burlington, and arrived just as the conference had closed its session for that day. Some considerable uncertainty rested on my mind in reference to my success in my application for license. The doubtfulness of my succeeding was increased by the consideration that the local preacher best acquainted with me (Mr. B. Craft) was prevented by the storm from coming in season, and only one of those present (Mr. Sandford) had ever heard me preach. But I committed my

case to the Lord, knowing that my motive was to please him, and if he saw it best for me not to obtain license, I wished that it might be prevented ; but if it was for his glory, that he would give me favor in the eyes of his servants. The next morning after our arrival I was called before the conference for examination ; Rev. S. Merwin, presiding elder of the district, was chairman. He had no personal acquaintance with me, and when I replied to his first question, he fixed his keen eye upon me very attentively. I learned afterward that when he first heard my singular voice, he thought the brethren on Reading circuit must be almost crazy to recommend such a man for license to preach, for he was absent, in consequence of illness, when the quarterly conference examined and recommended me. Those who have seen him, and remember his piercing eye, can form some idea of my feelings when passing my examination under his searching look. Yet there was no unkindness in his manner. I afterward learned that, when the conference began to deliberate on my case, (after I had retired,) the prevailing opinion at first seemed to be that they could not then give me license, on account of the difficulty in my speech ; but the statements and arguments of my good friend brother Sand-

ford prevailed, and I was licensed as a preacher of the gospel. At the same time and place Stephen L. Stillman was licensed to preach. There were two or three other applications which were not successful. On Friday morning brother Sandford told me that the business of the conference would not permit him to leave soon enough to fill the appointment he had left on the way, and he wished me to take his horse and carriage, and go there and preach to the people. Good brother N. Tuttle, one of the oldest local preachers in the conference, happening to be present, encouraged me to go forward, observing, "You must go praying along through the snow," alluding to the unpleasant traveling on wheels while snow was lying on the ground. This good man's words have often come to my mind when I have been riding in similar circumstances, years after he had gone to his rest above. I have never found a better way than to "go praying." Accordingly I started, and, after a tedious journey of about twenty miles, arrived at the house of the person where I was to find entertainment. He was a friend to the Methodist Church, though not a member; and when I informed him for what purpose I had been sent there, he told me plainly that he did not think it would be best for me to at-

tempt to preach there, as the people would not understand me, and it would only bring disgrace on the cause. This was the beginning of my efforts after I had received license to preach; but, though trying to my feelings, I soon perceived that it was working for my good. And I will here say that, about eighteen months afterward, that same man very gladly consented for me to preach in the same place. But to return. After the congregation had assembled, just at the time for meeting to commence, Mr. Sandford arrived, in company with two other ministers, and filled his own appointment, much to my satisfaction and that of the people.

Some of my first efforts to preach were in school-houses and private houses, in neighborhoods where there was no regular sabbath preaching. The first instance of awakening which occurred, to my knowledge, through my feeble efforts, was in the town of Weston, a very few weeks after I was licensed. The individual united with another branch of the Christian church, but soon went home to her Father's house on high. In the course of a few months other cases took place, which encouraged me in my Master's work. Among other places where I attempted to preach Jesus, I went to the house of a good brother in Ridge

field, Jabez M. Gilbert, who is still living, and whose son is now a minister of the New-York Conference. As there was then no Methodist church in that town, his own house was used for preaching, and some happy seasons have I enjoyed there, both in public meetings and in religious conversation with the good man and his family.

About this time several of my intimate friends were induced to leave the Methodist E. Church, but I have always been thankful that I felt no disposition to follow their example.

My convictions of duty, as to devoting myself *wholly* to the ministry, continuing, I opened my mind, with much trepidation, to a kind father in the ministry, on the subject of applying for admission into the traveling connection. This was about six months after I was licensed to preach. He frankly told me that, in consequence of my impediment, and as so large a proportion of the conference were perfect strangers to me, he thought it very doubtful whether I should be admitted, observing very kindly, at the same time, that if the majority of the conference knew me as well as he and some others did, he thought there would be no difficulty. As I saw no way to perform what I considered to be duty but to do what I could, I concluded to

spend my time in preaching, personal religious conversation, and suitable studies, till my little stock of means (not quite one hundred dollars) was exhausted, and then to engage again in manual labor, till I could refit myself with plain, cheap raiment, and then spend another season exclusively in ministerial labors. This was the course I had marked out to pursue, unless the door should open for my entering the regular work as traveling preacher. In the mean time I intended to make the necessary application to the proper authorities for admission, and if I failed, I could but fail.

I found no difficulty in obtaining suitable places for preaching, in different neighborhoods, both on sabbath and week days. But a great trial was at hand. My father, though a Methodist, and I believe a good man, could not see it my duty to spend my whole time in attending meetings. He hired me (as I was out of my minority*) when I was not absent, engaged in preaching, and he wished to continue to hire me. But I felt something of what the apostle expressed when he said, "Wo is me if I preach not the gospel." It was in September, 1822, I think, when my father and myself were labor-

*I had returned from my brother's to my father's house, in the spring of 1822.

ing in the field together, that I told him of my determination to travel and preach. Never can I forget the reply, which went like a dagger to my heart: "It would be more afflictive to me, my son, to have you do so, than it would for me to follow you to the tomb." But filial affection could not absolve me from what I considered to be the claims of duty to God. Early in October I left my dear father and mother, with an intention to fill some appointments which I had made, and to make other appointments. The feelings of my heart (as I walked along the road, after I had gone a few rods from my father's house) were of the most tender kind, and drew tears from my eyes. But God supported me, and I prayed for my parents, that he would support them also.

A revival had recently commenced in Reading, under the labors of Mr. Maffitt. He had left for some other place, but the work was still going on. I went thither, and was kindly received by both preachers and people. I rejoiced with the young converts, pointed the mourners to Christ, warned sinners to repent, and preached Jesus to the people. After a very few days spent in this manner, I went to other places. In different parts of the towns of Danbury, Ridgefield, Wilton, and North Salem, I preach-

ed, in weakness, the gospel of Christ, and met with more encouragement from the people of God than I had anticipated. In North Salem I fell in with an aged traveling minister who proposed to me that I should fill three or four of his week-day appointments. It was late in the afternoon before he met me at the place where he had appointed to give me the necessary directions. As soon as he had given me these, I started on foot to go a number of miles to the first appointment. I was a stranger to the way, and a part of it was lonely, while another part of it lay through a neighborhood called *Sodom Corner*. As the sun declined low in the west, and I reflected that I was going among a people who neither knew me nor expected me, my heart well nigh sunk within me. But I looked to God for support, and pressed forward. When the labors of the evening were finished, I could praise God for permitting me to bear the cross for my dear Lord and Saviour.

The Rev. Samuel Cochran, who finished his course in May, 1845, was then (1822) preaching in the Reading circuit. At one time he asked me to go to a place to labor, where there was an old, intelligent society. "Do you think I can do any good if I go?" was my inquiry. He answered me by another laconic question

“Do you suppose that God has called you to preach, and you cannot do any good?” This question of his has often occurred to my mind, long since it was asked, when I have been tempted to neglect effort through fear that *I could do no good*. At another time when he met our class, and I spoke something of my temptations, he said, “Elbert, as the devil has troubled you so much by his temptations, if I were in your place, I would do all the injury to his kingdom that I possibly could.”

In the early part of December I applied to the quarterly conference for recommendation to the traveling connection. This was granted, but, as I afterward learned, it was after some hesitation, and with the understanding that the presiding elder should employ me before the annual conference met, so that he might know whether it would answer for him to recommend me as a traveling preacher. I was invited to lodge at the same house where the presiding elder did. He proposed to me to go to Durham circuit, and assist brother Bowen and brother Nixon, a few weeks. He gave me to understand that it would not only be acceptable to the people there, to have the help of a young preacher, but he desired to give me a trial among strangers. He informed me that if I could go

to the circuit, he presumed that some brother would willingly lend me a horse to use on the circuit. A few days after this, I left my father's house, not knowing a single person, either preacher or private member, on the circuit.

Such articles as were absolutely necessary I carried in a small bundle, and walked about twenty-six miles, to the city of New-Haven, where I inquired for Elias Gilbert, on whom I had been directed to call by brother Merwin, the presiding elder. When informed who had sent me, and where I was going, he received me kindly. Next day I walked through the snow (which was falling) to Hamden Plains, four miles distant. Here I called on Amos Benham, as directed by brother M., and before night had the privilege of meeting Rev. J. Bowen, and giving him a letter of introduction from the presiding elder. Here, too, I was received with kindness by the family and by the minister, and the next day preached in the afternoon and evening. During the seven weeks following, I preached in Hotchkistown, Bethany, Prospect, Cheshire, Meriden, Southington, Black Rock, Durham, Middlefield, Haddam, Ponsett, and Wallingford; and at some of these places a number of times. One evening I attended a watch-night at Hamden Plains, where brother

Merwin and brother Samuel Luckey (then stationed in New-Haven) preached, and where they insisted I should preach also. It was a heavy cross, but the Lord enabled me to bear it. In February, 1823, I went to the district conference at Middlebury, Conn., and here I received a recommendation, from that body, to be received on trial as a traveling preacher. It was here that I first saw and heard that holy, but singular man of God, James P. Horton, of Dutchess county, a local preacher, in whose conversion there had been a mighty display of divine grace.

Here I received directions to go to Amenia circuit in Dutchess county, N. Y., to fill a vacancy for a few weeks. So I returned my horse to the owner, and walked through New-Haven to Stratford, where I arrived on Saturday evening. Here I spent the sabbath, preaching twice myself, and hearing a good sermon from a holy man of God, Mr. Wilcox, a local preacher. He was one of Mr. Merwin's spiritual children, who had been awakened and converted about twenty-one years before, when Mr. M. was but young in the ministry. He, too, has left a world of trial for the home of the blessed. Next day I reached my father's house, where I spent a day or two, and then, obtaining the loan of a horse

from a brother, I went to Amenia. On the second day I reached the circuit. There was a little misunderstanding on the part of the presiding elder concerning the wishes of the preacher having charge of the circuit, which produced a degree of unpleasant feeling in my mind. On the first sabbath morning after my arrival, when I awoke, looked out of the window, and beheld the house of God where I was to preach that morning to a company of entire strangers, I was ready to wish myself at my father's house, if I could have been there with a good conscience. At the close of the service I felt much more peaceful, yea, I had a measure of joy in Christ. In the afternoon I had an appointment a few miles from the church, in a small house on the side of the mountain. I think it was a log house, the first which I was ever in. Here my soul was still more refreshed, and when, in the evening, I returned to the church to attend a prayer meeting, I found it good, yea, very good, to be there. Next day I felt willing to go to the different places on the circuit, and invite souls to Christ.

Ten weeks I spent on that circuit, and found the people generally kind, and though some of them were wealthy, many, even of them, were humble. There had been a very gracious re-

vival on the circuit during the year previous, under the labors of the Rev. Daniel Brayton, who was still laboring among them. When the quarterly meeting came, I inquired of Mr. Merwin whether I had better procure a horse, saddle, bridle, &c., so as to be prepared to go to a circuit when conference closed its session, if I should be received, or whether the probability was so small as not to warrant me in so doing. His reply encouraged me to make the necessary preparations. When the preachers returned from conference, I was informed that I was received on trial, and appointed to Goshen circuit, Litchfield county, Connecticut.

At that time Upper Canada was connected with the M. E. Church in the United States. Before the information from conference arrived, and while I was filling brother Cochran's appointments on Reading circuit, during his absence at conference, my dear mother said to me, "You will not go to Canada if you are appointed there; will you?" But I dared not say that I should decline going even to Canada: for I had said to the presiding elder, "If this conference should be full, so that I am not wanted here, and there are other conferences where my labors are needed, I am willing to go." But Providence kindly directed me to a field of labor

less than sixty miles from my native place. I have no doubt that considerable effort was necessary on the part of my presiding elder, and other friends in the conference, to convince a majority of their brethren of the propriety of employing me as an itinerant minister, and my prayer is, that those who voted to admit me among their number may have cause to rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not labored in vain.

CHAPTER III.

TWO YEARS OF PROBATION IN THE ITINERANT MINISTRY—1823, 1824. TWO YEARS ON BURLINGTON CIRCUIT—1825, 1826.

ON the 12th of June, 1823, I left my father's house for Goshen. The first night I tarried with brother Tuttle, the local preacher whom I have already mentioned. Next day I went to Goshen, and called on brother T. Munson, a steward of the circuit, whose attachment to the cause of Christ, and steadfastness in the faith of the gospel, have been witnessed by many of the ministers of Christ. The preacher in charge of the circuit was brother Brayton, with whom I had formed an acquaintance in Amenia. The circuit embraced appointments in Goshen, Cornwall, Milton, Litchfield, Sharon, Canaan, Norfolk, Kent, Warren, New-Preston, and New-Milford.

It was but a short time after I went to Goshen circuit, that a young man was awakened under one of my feeble sermons. He had long been the subject of parental prayer, and had a praying wife also. He did not immediately yield to conviction, but a short time afterward

was more deeply awakened in hearing brother Merwin. In a few days he went to a camp meeting at Burlington, where (after strong cries and supplications) he was joyfully set at liberty. He now resides hundreds of miles from Goshen, and from my residence also. But a few months since I heard of his continued attachment to the cause of Christ; and a day or two ago the good news reached my ears of the conversion of his son, a student in college. The awakening and conversion of that man, and a few others in different parts of the circuit, encouraged me to continue my efforts in preaching the gospel.

At the camp meeting just mentioned was a holy woman—Elvira Stillman*—with whom, and her amiable companion, I formed an acquaintance. Her simplicity in witnessing for God, her fervor in prayer and praise, her courageous yet prudent manner of warning the lukewarm professor and the careless sinner, have left an indelible impression on my mind. At the same camp meeting I became acquainted with Elisha West and his pious wife, who resided in Burlington. They seemed to take a deep interest in the temporal welfare of the preachers, and were still more solicitous for their

* See an account of this eminent saint in Tract No. 95, published by the Methodist Tract Society.

spiritual prosperity. To lead the younger ministers nearer to God, and to encourage them to plunge deeper into the divine fullness, was the delight of their hearts. But they have gone to their eternal home ; and “they, being dead, yet speak.”

In the east part of Sharon was a grave which I delighted to visit, and around which I loved to linger. It was the grave of Rev. Gad Smith, who died in the year 1817. His course in the ministry was short, but marked by faithfulness and success. In pastoral visiting he was eminently useful. I never saw him, but had heard much of his piety, humility, and zeal. I have been told that when his voice failed, so that he could not speak above a whisper, he would rise in the congregation and address them through a brother, who repeated his words in an audible voice to the people : and, when riding along the road, he would sometimes call the little children, whom he passed, to his side, and talk to them about the love of Jesus. His brother Horatio was a steward and leader on this circuit when I traveled there. His faithfulness in his official duties, his kind hospitality, his regular attendance with his family upon the means of grace, and his consistency of conduct, which was evident to all, have enshrined that good man in

my affections and in my memory. He was a member of the legislature of the state, first in the lower and afterward in the upper house. But elevation in office did not lead him from the feet of Jesus. One of his sons, who was, perhaps, between ten and fifteen years old when I first knew the family, has since been converted, called to the ministry, blessed in his labors, and taken home to glory, to join his sainted father in the songs of the blessed. I refer to Rev. Gad N. Smith, who died in the city of New-York in 1845. Frequently have I seen him, when a lad, enter the Methodist church in Cornwall, and take his seat by his father, to hear the gospel from my lips. O may I be permitted to sit down with them in the kingdom of God!

In the autumn of the year I was permitted to visit my dear parents, and though one of them had objected so strongly to my entrance into the itinerant ministry, yet they both seemed very glad to see me. On my return, I spent a little time at the district conference held in Reading. Among those licensed to preach on that occasion were Raphael Gilbert, now a superannuated preacher in the New-York Conference, and Charles Sherman, who died in the city of Troy, March 10, 1844. The latter was the son of Elijah Sherman, of Woodbury, Con-

necticut. The father was a pattern of plainness in dress and manners, and regularity and zeal in the worship and service of his God. The son, who was licensed to preach when about twenty years of age, and who entered the traveling connection about seven years afterward, proved to be a burning and shining light, thereby verifying the prediction which Samuel Merwin once made in my hearing: "I think," said he, "that Charles will become a star of the first magnitude." In the afternoon of the day in which the district conference closed, I rode several miles in company with brother C. Sherman, preached in a school-house in the evening, and then went four miles further to his pious father's house, a habitation which had long been known as one of the *preachers' homes*. The next day, which was Saturday, I reached my circuit, and was ready for the duties of the sabbath. Before I pass on I will mention one circumstance which occurred not long before Charles Sherman and his pious father met in the realms of bliss, for there but was a short interval between the deaths of the two. The son came from his distant residence to visit his aged and infirm father. The old man's memory had so failed him that could not recollect his own children. His house was near the house of

God, and his son, while at home, preached in the church. After preaching, the father kindly approached the preacher, unconscious of his being one of his own family, and said, "Brother, will you go home with us? we entertain the preachers sometimes;"—thus showing that though he had forgotten many things, he was "not forgetful to entertain strangers."

Before the conference year closed we had a revival of religion in one part of our circuit, which greatly rejoiced my heart; yet, in reviewing the labors of that year, I mourn that I was not more faithful. It is possible that some persons, who might then have been led to Christ, had I been more watchful and zealous, are now in the world of wo. I do not think that I was fully sensible of the relative importance of pastoral visiting, till I had been in the ministry nearly seven years. Perhaps much more good might have been effected had I been as faithful in this department of labor as some of my brethren. A "course of study" was officially recommended to me and all the probationers of the conference; and we expected to be examined by a committee after we had been two years on trial. Among the books which I perused, in compliance with that recommendation, were Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Rollin's History, part of Clarke's

and part of Benson's Commentary. Prideaux's Connections, Locke on the Human Understanding, and Wesley's Sermons, were, I think, included. Our attention was also directed to grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Watson's incomparable Institutes and evangelical Exposition had not then been published on this side of the Atlantic. Having but few books of my own, I was thankful for the privilege of borrowing some of the books recommended, from my colleague, and other friends on the circuit.

While reading for the improvement of the mind, I did not feel willing to neglect the cultivation of religious affections in the heart. Religious biography, I have already remarked, was rendered peculiarly useful to me. Perhaps no work of that kind ever did me more good than the "Memoir of William Bramwell," which fell into my hands about this time. So highly do I prize that work, that I have more than once called attention to it through our religious paper, and should this notice of it add one more to the number of the readers of that good book, it would gladden my heart.

In June, 1824, the New-York Annual Conference held its session. My colleague attended, but I continued on the circuit, endeavoring to promote the little revival which had com-

menced in one neighborhood. When the preacher returned, he informed me that Rev. A. Scholefield was appointed preacher in charge of the Goshen circuit, to which I was reappointed. It will be remembered that I have stated that this good man commenced his labors as an itinerant preacher on Reading circuit. Then, when I was a lad of ten years old, I saw and heard him; but had not seen him from that time till fourteen years afterward, when he was appointed my senior colleague on Goshen circuit; and a most kind and fatherly colleague I found him. We labored together in harmony, but saw no very remarkable result of our labors. He had been attending the General Conference, in Baltimore, of which he was a member, and sometimes entertained me with descriptions of some of the most eminent men in that body, and by narrating some of the conversations that passed between them.

In the course of this year I attended three camp meetings. The first was at Burlington, Conn., under the superintendence of our new presiding elder, Rev. S. Luckey. It was a good meeting to many, and especially to one of the ministers, who was abundantly blessed of the Lord. One of the conversions which took place at this meeting I will advert to in few words.

It was that of a youth, the son of one who had been serving God ever since the days of Jesse Lee's travels in New-England, and who had come with this son (I believe the youngest) to the camp meeting, praying and hoping he would be induced to seek the Lord. Time passed away, but the son remained indifferent, and seemed inclined rather to trifle away his time, than to be even an attentive hearer of the truth. The father was grieved, and had thoughts of taking the son home before the meeting closed, fearing he would receive injury rather than good. I was a perfect stranger to the young man, and then knew nothing of these circumstances. But on the last evening of the meeting, during a very solemn and pathetic address which was given from the stand, I observed a young man listening attentively, till he began to weep, and, turning his back to the speaker, walked away among the trees. The thought occurred that probably he was affected by the word, and, being unwilling to yield, was endeavoring to hide his conviction. "Shall I not make an effort to do him good?" was the inquiry which arose in my mind. My resolution was formed immediately, and before I had lost sight of him, I started to overtake him. Coming up gently behind him, I inquired concerning

his feelings, found him serious and tender, and ascertained that he was the son of a pious brother in Christ, and advised him to seek for pardon without delay. He took the advice kindly, and, I believe, that night found mercy at the hand of the Lord. In a few years after this, I had the happiness of seeing this young man on the walls of Zion, and he is now laboring as the pastor of a Methodist church in one of the most flourishing cities in the state of New-York, a church containing more than five hundred communicants.

Another camp meeting which I attended this year was in North Canaan, Litchfield county, Conn. Here I had the pleasure of meeting with the following brethren in the ministry: Henry Stead, (who, as presiding elder of that district, had charge of the meeting,) George Coles, Timothy Benedict, Gershom Pierce, and several others. It was both pleasant and profitable to me to extend my acquaintance among my fathers and brethren in the ministry.

At this camp meeting brother Coles composed the following lines, descriptive of the character of the preachers who were present on that occasion:—

Adorable Saviour, who, in thy right hand,
Hold'st the stars, and they shine at thy gracious command;

We thank thee that *Canaan* is blessed with a cluster,
Who shine upon us with a borrowed lustre.

With pleasure we listen, and highly we prize,
The prudent advices of *Henry*, (*a*) the wise:
He warns us of danger, and points out the way
In which we should travel by night and by day.
Nor will we believe, though learned men tell us,
That error is truth. Our *Gershom*, (*b*) the zealous,
Will give us strong reasons, and arguments fair,
And the truth as in Jesus will boldly declare.

"Ye cannot be perfect," say some to this day,
But *John*, (*c*) the beloved, has shown us the way:
To *Arnold*, (*d*) the orator, much has been given;
He calls to repentance, and points us to heaven.
To *Asaph*, (*e*) the singer, we look for our guide
In music's sweet strains. While the soft-flowing tide
Of *Parmeles*' (*f*) eloquence charmingly rolls,
Taking captive our hearts, and delighting our souls.

We're exhorted the kingdom of heaven to seek,
And told of its blessings by *Moses* (*g*) the meek;
We love the old way, which God hath appointed,
And hail our Immanuel with *Cyrus*, (*h*) the anointed.

Released from the furnace of sickness and pain,
We are glad to see *Timothy* (*i*) here once again,
With *Datus* (*j*) and *Earl*, (*k*) who were once in the field,
And the sword of the Spirit did manfully wield.

We are glad to hear *John*, (*l*) whose surname is Sweet,
And all our dear brethren with kindness we'll greet;

(*a*) Henry Stead, P. E. (*b*) Gershom Pierce. (*c*) John Lovejoy.
(*d*) Arnold Scholefield. (*e*) The author's assumed name.
(*f*) Parmele Chamberlin. (*g*) Moses Amedon. (*h*) Cyrus Silliman.
(*i*) Timothy Benedict. (*j*) Datus Ensign.
(*k*) Earl Bancroft. (*l*) John Sweet, a local preacher.

With all our old friends that come from afar,
To encamp in the field, and to join in the war.

If *Robert* (*m*) and *Elbert* (*n*) will lead on the van,
And *Julius*, (*o*) and *Johnny*, (*p*) and *Coles*, (*q*) to a man,
Will stand in their lot, and proceed without fear,
And *Phineas* (*r*) and *Billy* (*s*) will bring up the rear :

If *Stephen*, (*t*) the martyr for Jesus, will pray,
And *Samuel*, (*u*) the prophet, will preach night and day ;
If the Spirit of truth will but lead us along,
“ Hallelujah to Jesus ” shall still be our song.

Then let the world rage, and our enemies frown,
In the strength of Jehovah we'll tread them all down ;
Our forces we'll range in the name of the Lord,
And victory and glory shall be our reward.

(*m*) Robert Travis. (*n*) Elbert Osborn. (*o*) Julius Field.
(*p*) John Nixon. (*q*) Coles Carpenter. (*r*) Phineas Cook.
(*s*) Billy Hibbard. (*t*) Stephen L. Stillman. (*u*) Samuel D.
Ferguson.

At each of the camp meetings in Burlington, and at this meeting in Canaan, it fell to my lot to preach one of the sermons. Several of the sermons preached by my brethren at this meeting were powerfully impressive, particularly a discourse from my colleague, from the solemn oath of the Lord, recorded Ezek. xxxiii, 11. Here, for the first time, I heard a sermon from Rev. Geo. Coles. It was concerning worshiping God after the way which some call heresy. Here, too, I formed a pleasing acquaintance with a young school teacher by the name of John B. Husted,

and received from him a pressing invitation to call on him, at his father's house, in Alford, in Massachusetts, if I should go to the camp meeting in Nassau, in Rensselaer county, N. Y., which was to be held in a few weeks. When the week of that camp meeting arrived, I rode, on Monday, forty miles on horseback, and stopped for the night at Mr. Husted's hospitable habitation. And often have I, since that time, enjoyed his hospitality with gratitude, and listened with delight to the accounts which he gave of the introduction of Methodism into Alford and the vicinity. He particularly named, among the pioneers, the Rev. Ebenezer Stevens, a good man, who was sometimes called *the hemlock preacher*. Whether it was because he resided in a cottage surrounded by lofty hemlock-trees, or because of some roughness and eccentricity in his manner of preaching, or from both causes combined, that he received this appellation, I cannot tell. He was doubtless a man of considerable ingenuity, deep piety, and extensive usefulness. When traveling a rough, mountainous circuit, which called him from his home several weeks at a time, he would return to his cottage among the hemlocks, where two plain chairs, and a long bench for the children to sit on, formed all the sitting accommodations

of the dwelling, and he would cheerfully converse with them and his friends on the things of God, and joyfully unite with them in humble prayer and praise. To murmuring and discontent he appeared to be a stranger: and his sincere humility was as remarkable as his contentment. Having spent one evening with Mr. Husted and his wife, before he departed he kneeled down to pray, commencing thus: "Lord, we have been talking about many things which we might as well have let alone. We pray thee to forgive us." I was the more interested in Mr. H.'s account of this good man, because in Litchfield county, where I was laboring, and where he had formerly labored, the name of father Stevens was as "ointment poured forth."

On Tuesday morning I left my friends at Alford, not knowing then that in the lapse of a few years the young schoolmaster would enter the ministry, and soon be appointed presiding elder, and be elected a delegate to the General Conference, as has been the case. Twenty miles, I think, was the distance which I rode from Alford, before I reached the camp ground, where religious exercises were just commencing. While the people were singing the first hymn, the presiding elder whispered to me that a chair for the preacher to kneel on would be

a convenience, as the book board was rather too high. Looking down from the stand, I saw a plain looking man, of farmer-like appearance, sitting in a chair near one of the posts which supported the stand, and I was on the point of asking him to give up his chair, but did not finally conclude to do so. In an hour or two after the close of the first service, I met with this old gentleman in the preachers' tent, and to my astonishment was introduced to him as Bishop George. My astonishment was the greater, because I had heard him preach eight years before, and yet I did not dream that this was he. Had I dispossessed him of his chair, it would have mortified *me* much, but I presume *he* would have passed it over with the utmost kindness. In the course of the meeting he preached a warm and powerful sermon, and, although the rain fell plentifully while he was preaching, it did not quench the holy flame burning in the venerable preacher's breast, or prevent it from kindling in the hearts of many of his hearers. The good bishop did not confine his labors to preaching, but in the prayer meeting pointed the mourner to Christ, and lifted "up holy hands" in prayer to God for them. It was said that in one tent where he labored, in the prayer meeting, there were, during one evening, between

twenty and thirty that professed to find mercy, and, among the rest, was a little boy, who, when he had obtained the blessing, threw his arms around the bishop's neck, and exclaimed, "O, father, do help me to praise the Lord." Some, with whom I have since become acquainted, have referred to that prayer meeting as the place of their espousal to Christ.

At this camp meeting there were some powerful exhortations delivered, and the people did not commence retiring to their tents as soon as the exhortation commenced; a habit too frequent at some camp meetings. Here, for the first time, I heard the fervent entreaties and solemn warnings of a minister who is still a member of the New-York Conference, and whose words were truly "words of fire." Many felt that they were indeed accompanied by the demonstration and power of the Spirit.

The love-feast on Friday, with which the meeting closed, was a most melting time. One short narrative I distinctly recollect, given by a minister who was a native of England, (Rev. Henry Stead,) where he had heard the holy William Bramwell preach in the open air. He had been laboring in America about twenty years. He told us that he had heard, in his own country, of the great opening for labor in

America, the camp meetings which had just been providentially commenced, and the revivals which followed, and he felt a desire to come here. He stated his impressions to his father-in-law, who said in reply, "While *you* live, I have no fears but that my daughter will be kindly provided for wherever you and she may go. But if you should die and leave her in that far-distant country, among strangers, I know not what she might suffer." "Never fear, father," replied the young minister, "I am going where the God of the Christians lives, and he will take care of us." How cheering to any minister, going forth among strangers, uncertain as to the treatment which he shall receive, to remember that he "is going where the God of the Christians lives!" The good man is now a worn-out soldier, but his pious wife, after having been his helper in the Lord's work in America for about twenty-two years, went home to rest, where one of her sons, Rev. William D. Stead, (a useful traveling preacher,) has lately gone to join her in worshiping the *God of the Christians* in his holy temple above. My journey back from this camp meeting was peculiarly pleasant. The weather was serene, the traveling good, and my soul was happy in God. A part of the way I rode near the banks of the

Housatonick. This would naturally lead me to think of my native place, and my father's abode, not very far from the mouth of that stream, but nearly one hundred miles from where I then was. I rejoiced in the fact that God had given me fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, among strangers.

Little did I then imagine that, in twenty years from that time, multitudes upon multitudes of travelers from Bridgeport and from Boston would be carried through that peaceful, quiet valley, on their way to Albany, with great velocity, in carriages moving without horses, and urged forward by the combined force of water and fire.

The Rev. Samuel Draper having been taken away by death just after receiving his appointment to Dutchess circuit, his colleague, brother Cochran, was assisted for some months by Cyrus Foss, a young local preacher, who had been licensed on the circuit. In January, 1825, the presiding elder thought it best for me to change with my dear brother Foss. This information was communicated to me two or three days before I was to leave for Dutchess. After enjoying a good quarterly meeting with our brethren in Goshen, and receiving an affectionate farewell from our friends, and especially from my

beloved colleague, Mr. Scholefield, I went on my way to preach Jesus among strangers. But my former friend, Mr. Cochran, was ready to receive me kindly, and in the house of brother Van Benschoten, (now with God,) a steward and a local preacher, and a very kind man, I found a place to deposit such things as I did not wish constantly to carry with me. Before this, when but a boy, I had often heard the preachers speak of Peter Eighmey, and when I came in sight of the large Dutch stone house which the old gentleman and his pious companion occupied, I "thanked God and took courage." Learning that he and his wife could converse in the German language, (or high Dutch, as it is sometimes called,) my curiosity prompted me to ask them to let me hear a specimen, a request with which they readily complied. In Connecticut, where I had spent nearly all my days thus far, no one was found to converse in the Dutch or German language. Since then I have often heard, in some of the families where I have lodged, lively conversation in these languages. But pure religion is the same loving, joyful principle, among Dutch and English, Irish and Americans, and "Christ is all and in all." In the Dutch stone house of brother Eighmey I enjoyed some joyful hours with God's loving people.

Amidst the happy seasons granted to me while on this circuit, I had some very powerful temptations; and, in looking back upon that part of my history, I cannot but adore the protecting goodness of my heavenly Father. And I am sensible, too, that more watchfulness and prayer would have been far better for my spiritual welfare.

Within the bounds of this circuit lived James P. Horton, whom I have before mentioned. For nearly a week together I enjoyed his company and assistance, which, at that time, was most opportune; for almost every day during that week I had two appointments, one in the afternoon, and another in the evening; and my voice was so much affected by a severe cold, that I should have found it very difficult to go through the duties expected of me without some help. Though I could not prevail on brother H. to preach for me but once, yet he was uniformly willing to give an exhortation. Sometimes, when I had preached thirty minutes, he would exhort forty-five minutes. The brethren all seemed glad to see and hear him, notwithstanding his peculiarities. Most of them had long known him, and they loved him for his piety. Perhaps I shall be pardoned if I give one or two instances of his innocent mis-

takes. I will first remark, however, that his soul was so full of gratitude, that of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke. Sometimes, for want of a little more consideration, he would introduce an ascription of praise, as “glory,” or “hallelujah,” in such a connection with other sentences as to produce a somewhat ludicrous effect. Once, in exhorting at one of my appointments in the highlands near Cold Spring, on the Hudson River, he referred to the sufferings of St. Paul, using this expression, that “St. Paul received forty-*nine* stripes save one, hallelujah!” At another time I heard him relate a dream in a class meeting, concerning having a contest with Satan in the form of a snake:—“But,” said he, “I picked up a *gad*,* and commenced laying on the strokes; but I found that before each stroke I had to look up: after striking once, I could not strike again till I had again looked up: and O what a *whaling* I did give him.” Though there might be nothing supernatural in that dream, and though it was related in that peculiar way, there was in it a striking emblematical representation of the course to be pursued by the Christian in his conflicts with his spiritual foes:—

* Meaning, a slender branch or limb of a tree.

“For ever standing on his guard,
And *looking up* to” God.

Once I recollect he was so happy in his God when we retired to rest, that after we had lain down, he broke forth into singing one of his favorite hymns, thus reminding me of the language of the Psalmist, in the 5th verse of the 149th Psalm. Perhaps I had better anticipate my narrative so far as to say that, in the year 1840, when returning from a camp meeting to the city of New-York, I listened to the last exhortation which I ever heard from the lips of “Uncle Jimmy,” as he was familiarly called. The spacious deck of the steamboat was crowded with people, and much melting tenderness of feeling mingled with the holy joy that pervaded the assembly. Just before he sat down, he was expressing, in a simple yet fluent manner, his hope of glory, and describing his expectations of meeting prophets, apostles, and martyrs, in the bright abode. “There,” said he, “I expect, in the regions of the heavenly glory, to meet dear old father Wesley. And what shall I tell him from you, brother Osborn?” said he, turning suddenly toward me. “Tell him that I am determined to meet him in heaven, and to get as many as I can to go there with me,” was my answer. “I will,” was

the reply of the holy brother, and immediately he sat down. May God grant that this promise made to the sainted Wesley, through one who has since gone to join "the saints in light," together with all the solemn promises made to God by his unworthy servant, the writer, may be religiously kept.

During the four months which I spent with brother Cochran, in the Dutchess circuit, we had reason to believe that a number were converted, and I think about twenty-five were added to the societies.

It was not far from this time that I formed an acquaintance with Alpheus Jewett and his wife, of Sharon, in Connecticut, a town adjoining Dutchess county. They were among the earliest Methodists in the state, and could tell of some of the first visits made to that part of the country by Freeborn Garrettson, Cornelius Cook, Benjamin Abbott, and others. The wife of my beloved colleague was a daughter of theirs. One of their sons has been *more than thirty-eight* years an itinerant minister, and for a number of years a presiding elder, while another son, who bears the name of the sainted Garrettson, (given him by his parents no doubt from grateful affection to that good man,) has recently been appointed one of the judges of the highest

court of the state of New-York. May their children and children's children follow them home to paradise.

In May, 1825, I left my circuit for conference, which was to be held this year in the city of Troy, this being some years before the Troy Conference was set off from the New-York Conference. When I arrived at Amenia, I fell in company with Rev. R. Seney and Rev. C. Siliman, who were going to conference together, and as I was a stranger to the road, their company was the more agreeable. On our way we dined with Charles Northrop, and found hospitable entertainment at night with a good brother in the city of Hudson. As I rode on horseback and my brethren in a carriage, I had less opportunity for conversation and more for reflection. I had endeavored to prepare for the examination, which was to precede admission into full connection, but how I should pass I could not foretell: and if I passed that ordeal, it was uncertain what disposition the conference would make of my case: and if admitted, I could not tell how far I might be sent, nor what kind of a circuit I should have: but one thing cheered my heart—the consideration that the great God rules and overrules for good. My little stock of clothing I carried with

me, so as to be ready, when conference closed, to go to my appointment, if I should receive one, whether it were in the north or the south, at the east or the west. From Hudson we went on Saturday to the city of Albany, where my brethren remained till Monday. The stationed preacher in the city, Rev. T. Spicer, finding it necessary for me to go on, as I had to be in Troy on Monday morning to meet the committee, kindly gave me directions, and I went on and crossed the river in the ferry-boat just after the setting of the sun, and, for the first time, found myself in the pleasant city of Troy. Here I was appointed to board with a kind brother by the name of Wallace.

On Monday morning the committee, namely, N. Bangs, P. P. Sandford, D. Ostrander, E. Washburn, and S. Luckey, met to examine the candidates in regard to their knowledge of theology, &c. About eight hours were occupied during the morning, afternoon, and evening, in this examination, and I felt thankful for that measure of composure of spirit which I was enabled to maintain.

On Tuesday morning at nine o'clock the New-York Conference began its session. To me it was an interesting sight to behold so many of my fathers in the ministry, some of whom had

been toiling on the borders of Canada, and others on the shores of Long Island, assembled together to deliberate on the affairs of the church. Many of these ministers I had heard preach in the days of my early youth; with several others I had formed an acquaintance during the last two years; and there were many more whose names I had often seen in the Minutes, but whose faces I had never seen before. Bishops George and Hedding were present: the latter I had never seen before: he had then been but about one year in the episcopacy.

I believe it was on the second day of the conference that my case was brought forward, and I retired from the conference-room with a trembling heart, while they deliberated on the matter. My suspense was removed in a short time by the information that I was admitted into full connection, and elected to deacon's orders. Before this, however, all the candidates had passed a very serious examination before the conference, and had made solemn promises in answer to the questions on page 38 of the Discipline, (edition of 1844,) section 9, chapter 1. These questions were accompanied with some impressive remarks by one of the bishops. After being admitted into full connection I was at liberty to vote in the conference.

On sabbath the deacons and elders were to be ordained—the former in Lansingburgh, by Bishop George, and the latter in Troy, by Bishop Hedding. On sabbath morning brother J. Z. Nichols and myself walked three miles from Troy, along the pleasant banks of the Hudson, to the little, low Methodist chapel, then standing in the village of Lansingburgh, where we, in company with several others, were to be solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, by the imposition of hands. It was a fine morning, and the house was crowded. The bishop preached most impressively from 2 Cor. v, 14, 15; and who could hear that sermon and not be moved—deeply moved? Among those ordained on that occasion were Parmele Chamberlin, Bezaleel Howe, John Kennaday, Wesley P. Lake, Richard Seaman, Robert Travis, William Todd, and William M. Willett. So affecting were the remarks made by our superintendent as he passed along within the communion rails, laying his hands upon the head of one after another, that almost every one of us was melted into tears, and several seemed overwhelmed with emotion. Especially did he urge us not to suffer even the tears of affectionate relatives to hinder us in the work of the Lord.

When the numbers in society were reported in conference, it was found there was a net gain of between six and seven hundred. Bishop George arose and remarked, that the tide of immigration, constantly flowing to the west, accounted in part for the smallness of this increase. But he urged us to consider whether a greater degree of zeal and faithfulness in the ministers of that conference (numbering more than one hundred) might not have been attended with much larger accessions of genuine converts. The few words which he uttered on that occasion sunk down into my heart.

At the close of the conference I was appointed to the Burlington circuit, in Connecticut, on which I labored two years. Rev. Samuel D. Ferguson was the preacher in charge the first year, and Rev. Joseph M'Creary the second. In these two years we witnessed some spiritual prosperity. In one part of Colebrook there was a considerable revival; and, among others who were brought in, one (who attributed his awakening, through God's blessing, to my instrumentality) has since that time, as I have been informed, commenced preaching the gospel in one of the western states. There were conversions also in Winsted, Newfield, and perhaps some other places, for we preached also in Burling-

ton, Farmington, Barkhamsted, Wolcottville, Harwinton, New-Hartford, Torrington, and the west part of Hartland. In some places we witnessed contentions among brethren in the society, which were very unpleasant to us, and probably hindered, in some degree, the spread of pure religion : nevertheless, there were very many faithful souls in this circuit, several of whom have since then gone to their rest in heaven.

While laboring in this circuit, I thought it most for the glory of God to change my condition in life, and was married September 22, 1825, to Miss Sarah Wright, of Cornwall, whom I had known for more than two years. I had considered it a prudent and proper course to abstain from taking any steps whatever toward matrimony, until I had consulted with some of the most prudent of my brethren, and until I believed the time was nearly come for me to enter into that "holy estate ;" for I had known some cases where young ministers had plunged themselves into difficulty, and others into grief, simply for want of consideration ; not to speak of some other cases still more dishonorable to the cause of Christ. I trust that our union was of God, and has been sanctified to our mutual benefit. May we be faithful to our blessed Lord,

“ And kindly help each other on,
Till both receive the starry crown.”

In August, 1826, I attended a camp meeting at Middlebury, in Connecticut, where a young man was awakened, who came a few weeks afterward to another camp meeting in Barkhamsted, where I had the pleasure of leading him to the altar of prayer, and rejoicing over him as one of the lambs of the Redeemer. He is now (March, 1846) presiding elder of the Paterson district, in New-Jersey.

At this camp meeting our beloved brother Scholefield presided. And here I felt perhaps more of the melting love of Christ in my heart while preaching, than I ever felt at any other time, while engaged in that exercise. Here I formed my first acquaintance with Rev. Elisha Andrews, then a young preacher full of zeal in his Master's cause. He came there in company with his colleague, J. B. Husted, about sixty miles on horseback. About eighteen years after that, while on his way to another camp meeting, he was drowned in the Hudson River, and his spirit was suddenly called home.

In May, 1826, I made a short visit to my dear parents, where I met my brother and sisters, and then went to the city of New-York to attend conference. Bishop George and Bishop

M'Kendree were present, the latter so feeble as to be unable to perform much of the labor devolving on the superintendents; yet he was continued in this world of toil five or six years longer than his healthy and robust colleague, Enoch George. A case of intemperance came up at this conference, which led the bishop to make some very forcible remarks, which I shall never forget. He cautioned us against the least approach toward such a dreadful whirlpool.

At this conference I formed an acquaintance with two men, for which I hope to bless God in eternity. Both of them were located preachers, and intimate friends of each other. Their names were Joel Ketchum and Elijah Chichester. The latter yet lives in Lansingburgh, where he resided in 1826; the former, I trust, now lives in the New Jerusalem. It appears that he commenced traveling in 1793, and located in 1801; having, in that time, labored on Marblehead circuit, in Massachusetts; on Middletown and Pomfret circuits, in Connecticut; in the city of Albany, and on Cambridge and Saratoga circuits, in the state of New-York. Whether he erred or not in locating, it is not for me to say; but of one thing I am certain, that *I* met with no encouragement to locate

while I was sojourning at his house during the conference. At that time he was so weak in body that he could not pray vocally, nor converse much, except in a whisper: yet this was very profitable to me; and while brother Chichester was leading our family devotions, God often met us in great mercy, and refreshed our souls abundantly. I will here say that when I last saw brother Ketchum, (in 1829,) his health was so far restored, that I had the pleasure of walking with him to his appointment, of hearing him preach an excellent sermon in Duane-street church, and of listening to his remarks in conversation on the subject of *continuance* in *secret* prayer. Of this he himself proved the benefit, as I have since learned from his pious, aged widow. She told me that, for some time before his departure, he was in the habit of frequently rising very early, that he might redeem a *longer* season for private devotion, and that she believed he was often abundantly blessed in thus following the example of Him who, when on earth, "rose up a great while before day" to pray. Shortly after my last interview with him, he sailed for Charleston on business, and neither he nor the vessel has since been heard of; but,

“ God his Redeemer lives,
And ever from the skies
Looks down, and watches all his dust,
Till he shall bid it rise.”

But to return to the Burlington circuit. The second winter which I spent there was abundant in snow; and the country being hilly, and in some places mountainous, the traveling was unpleasant. From information received from good authority, I suppose some of the snow-banks near my house, over which I frequently passed with my horse and sleigh, were fourteen or fifteen feet deep. Sometimes, when the snow had recently fallen, I did not venture to go quite home with my sleigh when I returned from my appointments, (fearing that I might stick fast in a snow-bank,) but left it at the house of a kind friend, who lived a little south of me, on much lower ground, and more sheltered from the wintry winds. But I lived to see that winter pass away, and the spring return in her beauty to bless the earth.

Many names connected with the Burlington circuit I should delight to record, but I will confine myself to four:—Daniel Coe,* a local

* Mr. C. has been suddenly called from his work to glory, since the above was written.

elder, who was a preacher long before I was in the ministry, (indeed, he was a member of the body which gave me my first license;) Thomas Sparks, a native of England, then a local, now a traveling, preacher; David Coe,* a leader and steward of the church, whose solemn, joyful songs of praise (though his body slumbers in the grave) still seem as it were to sound in my ears; and Judah Lewis, an exhorter, who, I trust, is still serving God either in the far west on earth, or in the upper and better country which he so diligently sought.

On my way with my wife to a quarterly meeting, in December, 1826, I called at the post-office, and found a letter, which I perceived, from the date of the post-mark, had been delayed by some accident or misdirection. I opened it, and read the account of my dear father's death. Tears streamed from my eyes, to the relief of my aching and throbbing heart, while my companion wept with me, as we went on our way. I had been to visit him in the former part of his illness, supposed him to be gaining when I left him, and almost concluded that he must be nearly well, as no letter came for some time, when the fatal tidings ar-

* His wife and my wife were sisters.

rived. But we did not mourn as those who have no hope, but thanked God for the reason we had to believe that he died in the Lord. The last letter which I received from him contained clear indications that he had seen his mistake in being so unwilling that his son should become an itinerant minister.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S ORDINATION AS AN ELDER UNTIL THE CLOSE OF HIS LABORS ON CHATHAM CIRCUIT, IN 1831.

AT the conference held in Troy, in May, 1827, I was ordained elder by the hands of the same good man who had ordained me a deacon, two years before. May I never forget that the vows of God are upon me! "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." I was appointed to the charge of the Granville circuit, embracing the following places in Massachusetts, namely: Feeding-hills, Southwick, Tatham, Westfield, Granville, East Granville, Otis, Blandford, Becket, Russel, Chester, and Worthington. Besides these appointments, my colleagues and I preached in Suffield, Windsor, Wintonbury, (now Bloomfield,) Rainbow, Turkey-hills, Simsbury, Granby, East Granby, Hartland, and Barkhamstead, in Connecticut. I removed my family about forty miles by land, to Feeding-hills, a parish in the town of West Springfield. My colleagues were Rev. C. F. Pelton, and a supernumerary preacher, Rev. C. Culver. I felt greatly my need of wisdom, as this was the first year in which I had been appointed to

the charge of a circuit. I feared that I might neglect some act of discipline which was necessary, or perform it in such a manner as would do more harm than good. But I sought the counsel of my colleagues, and of my presiding elder, brother Scholefield, who was a father to us all. We were obliged to expel a few persons who would not reform.

During the winter season we had an abundance of snow in the west and north part of the circuit, where the hills were high, and the winds bleak and cold. In one or two cases I was several hours in getting six or seven miles to an appointment. But God preserved man and beast, and watched over my family in mercy during my absence.

While on this circuit I visited the Connecticut state prison in Granby, then known by the name of Newgate. This was a short time before the new state prison in Wethersfield was completed. Not long after I wrote an article, which was published in a religious periodical, concerning this visit, a part of which I will here subjoin :—

“It was a fine morning in June; fragrant flowers bloomed in their native beauty, and the cheerful birds sung among the branches, as we traveled along. At length we beheld the pri-

son among the trees at a little distance before us. Ah! thought I, how often has the sight of those buildings struck the heart of a poor criminal with anguish! When we approached and rang the bell, the gate was opened, and we were conducted by one of the officers of the guard to the different apartments of the prison. Here we saw our fellow-men, who were doomed (some of them for years and others for life) to hard labor and confinement. The guards on the walls, armed with muskets; the chains worn by some of the prisoners; and the high walls that encompassed the prison, conspired to render the idea of imprisonment in such a place dreadful to the human mind. In vain are flowers and fruits scattered in profusion over the country around the prison; the prisoners see them not. Amid the noise of hammers, axes, saws, &c., they may possibly, now and then, hear the notes of the feathered songsters of the air, but this can only serve to tantalize them with the idea of surrounding enjoyments from which they are cut off. The friends of the prisoner—where are they? Where are the parents who watched over his infantile years; the brothers and sisters who were the companions of his childhood; the wife, the children whom he once embraced—where are they? Ah! how painful the thought!

“As we went from one apartment to another, and beheld these wretched criminals, they would raise their eyes toward the door, as if to see whether a relative had come to visit them: but I was a stranger to all, and they went on with their labor. I could not refrain from praying that my little son (who was in my arms) might never be brought to such an unhappy situation.

“Before we left the prison we were conducted into the caverns beneath.* Each of us carried a lighted candle as we descended into this subterranean region. And here we were shown the damp room where the prisoners formerly slept. Happily this practice was discontinued after a season. We proceeded from one part of the cavern to another, till our guide led us into what he called the *sounding-room*, where the echoes of the voice produced a loud and singular sound; and here was a chain firmly fastened to the rock, where very obstinate criminals are sometimes confined till they submit to the regulations of the establishment.

“This place has been compared by some to the abode of the wicked in another world, and perhaps it is a very suitable emblem. But though

* These were opened for mining purposes, I believe, long before a prison was established there.

there may be a strong resemblance, yet the one seems infinitely more intolerable than the other. *Here* the prisoner may have food and water ; but *there* the wicked wretch, confined in the prison of despair, may look in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. *Here* the criminal may sometimes be solaced by a visit from his friends ; but *there* the thought of meeting them leads him to exclaim, ‘Let them not come to this place of torment.’ *Here* the criminal may hope for liberation at the end of his term ; yea, perhaps sooner, through the compassion of those in power ; or even if his confinement is to continue through life, he looks forward to the day when his mortal frame shall rest in the quiet grave ; but *there* the eye of the unhappy creature looks through the vista of ages to come, and sees no end—*no end*—NO END to his confinement and punishment. *Here* the prisoner employs part of his time in projecting possible methods of escape ; but *there* he ruminates in gloomy horror on the impossibility of *any* escape. *Here* the obstinate criminal, confined in the dark cavern, hears his groans ‘return in sad echoes,’ while none is near to pity him and sympathize with him ; but *there* the condemned soul is not only unpitied, but probably tormented by the devil and his angels. We dread the thought of

being confined in an earthly prison like this; how much more should we dread the idea of being immured in that dungeon from which there is no return! How awful would be our feelings did we know that one poor man was pining in imprisonment in consequence of crimes committed through our solicitation, or by our encouragement; and how dreadful must be our condemnation should we encourage souls in the way to endless perdition! *Here*, perhaps, is a prisoner who may console himself with the consciousness of innocence of the crime for which he has been condemned; but *there* the remembrance of having sinned against an infinite God, and slighted infinite mercy, will produce a conviction in the sinner's breast that he deserves eternal punishment, and 'every mouth will be stopped.' 'Flee from the wrath to come,' for mercy yet waits to be gracious to penitent rebels."

I have before spoken of the satisfaction which I felt in perusing the first religious paper I ever saw; but I have neglected to mention that, while laboring on Burlington circuit, I obtained access to Zion's Herald, and before I left that circuit had the pleasure of acting as an agent for the Christian Advocate, which was first issued in 1826: and to this day I take a deep interest

in the weekly visits of these bearers of good tidings. The first scrap of my own writing which appeared in print was a little allegorical article entitled "Trial for Witchcraft," published first in Zion's Herald, and copied into some other religious papers. The next was "A Father's Letter to an Infant Son," which was copied by the Advocate, and one or two other periodicals. Both of these trifles, as well as several others written within a few years after, were sent to the editors without the writer's real name. Believing religious papers to be useful, and relying upon the judgment and fidelity of editors to reject, abridge, or insert, as the general good might require, I have thought it my duty to furnish short articles occasionally, and place them at their disposal; sometimes using one fictitious signature, at other times another.

In Westfield we preached frequently at the house of brother Henry Douglass, a pious mechanic. Two young men, in his employment then, are now itinerant Methodist ministers, Davis Stocking and Alden S. Cooper. I believe the latter was licensed to exhort during the second year in which I was on the Granville circuit; and he has been for some years a preacher in the Troy Conference. Brother

Stocking united with our church, on probation, when I preached at Westfield, for the first time, and I had the pleasure of signing his license to exhort before I left the circuit. For the last two years he has been stationed in Newburgh, in the New-York Conference. May they both long live to build up Zion!

When I first visited Wintonbury, I formed an acquaintance with a brother, (a young married man,) who, I soon learned, had exercises on the duty of entering the ministry. Finding that the brethren had confidence in him, I arranged matters so as to hear him preach, and cheerfully united with the ensuing quarterly conference in recommending him to the district conference for license. Such was the satisfaction given by his labors during eighteen months, that the last quarterly conference held before I left the circuit recommended him for admission, on trial, as a traveling preacher, and in May or June, 1829, he found his way to his appointed circuit, in the northern part of the state of Vermont. His name was Edwin E. Griswold, since well known by our brethren in New-York, New-Haven, Brooklyn, Newburgh, Middletown, Hempstead, and many other places, as an acceptable ambassador of Christ.

Saybrook is famous in the early ecclesiastical

history of Connecticut, and when I learned that there was to be a camp meeting there, I had a little curiosity to go to the place, the name of which was associated with the celebrated "Platform." I trust, however, that a stronger and far higher motive than curiosity was the chief cause of my going. Truly it was good to be there. One evening, after the preachers had mostly retired to rest, a messenger came to the preachers' tent, inviting brother Heman Bangs (who had recently labored in the city of Middletown) to go to one of the Middletown tents. By his invitation, I arose from my resting place and went with him. We found father Washburn, who was their present pastor, rejoicing with some who had just entered into the liberty of the children of God. It was a season long to be remembered.

While I was preaching on gospel freedom at that camp meeting, I took occasion to speak also of the terrible slavery of sin ; and, during my remarks, a young woman, to whom I was a stranger, who was standing on the borders of the large congregation, suddenly shrieked aloud, and fell helpless to the earth. I afterward learned, from a preacher who labored in the section of country where she resided, that, before the meeting closed, (I know not how soon

after the above circumstance,) she ventured by faith upon the merits of Christ; and I hope, if still alive, she is living for God and for heaven.

When a boy, in the time of the war of 1812-13-14, I was much interested in reading and hearing of the battles, both on the land and on the sea, between the American and British forces. I had heard the thunder of the enemy's cannon, as his ships floated over Long Island Sound. The name of the brave Decatur was familiar to my youthful ear, and the victory which he gained over the British frigate *Macedonian* (facetiously called sometimes *Alexander the Great*) had made a deep impression on my mind. Little did I think, in 1827, while floating down the Connecticut River, in the steamboat, to the Saybrook camp meeting, that I should there meet with one who fought on board of the *Macedonian* in 1812, and was taken prisoner with her, now fighting under the banner of King Jesus, a happy member of the Methodist Church: yet this proved to be the case; and if any desire to know the interesting particulars of that man's eventful life, they may find them detailed in a very pleasing narrative entitled "Thirty Years from Home; or, A Voice from the Main Deck, being the Experience of

Samuel Leech." It is written by himself. The pious reader will be pleased to learn that I have lately heard directly from Mr. L. by a relative of mine; that he is still living in Wilbraham, Mass., and faithfully serving that God who "covered his head in the day of battle." But every humane person, who reads his description of the horrors of the fight, as described in his book, from page 126 to page 140, must unite in the prayer, that God would hasten the day when nations will learn war no more.

I find, among my papers, a letter written just after the close of the first year of my labors on Granville circuit, from which I extract the following:—

"God has been merciful to this circuit during the past conference year. Though there has been, and still is, too much indifference in some places, yet there have been seasons of refreshing from the Lord. Brother Culver has been enabled to form a new society in Worthington and the borders of Chester, which numbered about thirty-three members at the time of conference, who are now preparing to build a house of worship. This society has recently been set off to another circuit. Upward of eighty have joined our church on probation in the circuit during the last conference year."

At the conference in New-York, in 1828, the presiding elder of our district, brother Scholefield, was not with us. He was taken sick in May, while attending the General Conference at Pittsburgh, far from his family and home, and sickness detained him there after the General Conference closed: but a kind brother delegate, Rev. Tobias Spicer, remained with him till he ventured to leave Pittsburgh, and they returned home together. May God grant that these friends may meet in that city where sickness cannot come, and where friends never part.

How affectionately did Bishop George refer to the absence and illness of brother Scholefield, at that conference, and how little did we then think, while listening to the bishop's remarks, that we should "see his face no more" on earth! In a few short months his spirit took its upward flight to the land of glorious rest.

About this time I was requested, by some of my brethren, to consult some eminent surgeons on the possibility of uniting my two palates, by a surgical operation, so as to form but one, or to have some artificial appendage attached to the roof of the mouth, that would remedy my defect in speaking. But though I have conversed with some of the most eminent surgeons

in our land, the facts which have come to my knowledge have led me to believe (whatever surgeons might hope) that I must wait till the resurrection morning before I have perfect organs of speech. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

At Springfield, about six miles from my residence, Rev. Timothy Merritt labored during the two years which I spent on the Granville circuit. He was a good old soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, who consecrated his mind, his tongue, and his pen, to the cause of the Redeemer and the good of souls. His field of labor was in one conference and mine in another, being divided by the Connecticut River, but our hearts were united. We have rejoiced together at his house, and at mine; while riding together in the carriage, and when worshiping in the tented grove. With this good man I visited Dr. Fisk, at Wilbraham, when he was the principal of the academy in that place. My wife and myself can never forget one happy, solemn season, (a select watch-night,) which we enjoyed with T. Merritt, when the blessing of perfect love was the subject of special conversation and earnest prayer. I bless God that I was permitted to form some acquaintance with that good and

great man, Dr. Fisk, and had the privilege of entertaining him under my roof. He visited most of the towns in our county, and preached temperance sermons, and formed temperance societies. Many of the people were convinced by his reasoning, captivated by his eloquence, and charmed with his piety. When the first opportunity presented, I cheerfully united with the temperance society on the old pledge, and seven years afterward, when invited to sign the pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquor as a beverage, I readily consented, and have never yet been sorry. Hoping that most of my readers have read, or will read, the interesting description of Dr. Fisk given by Dr. Bangs, in the fourth volume of his History, pages 313-329, I will say but little more concerning him. In his journeyings he called on a family, which happened, at that moment, to be unusually busy in some domestic concerns. It was near noon, and he was asked to stop and take such a dinner as they could prepare under the circumstances. He led his horse to the stable, and made everything pleasant to the family: when one of his friend's children was uneasy, he quieted it on his knee, and left a strong conviction upon the minds of the family that

he was an humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, and an eminent servant of the Most High God.

In the jail at Springfield, I made a religious visit to a man who had murdered his wife in Westfield, and soon afterward I was present at his trial and conviction. It was the first time I had ever seen a man tried for his life, and it brought to my mind solemn thoughts of that day when "the dead, small and great, will stand before God."

In Feeding-hills I first saw a Christian die—Mrs. Waters—who had been serving God faithfully from her youth for about twenty years. During an illness of several days she had manifested confidence in God. When death commenced his work, they sent for my wife and myself. We arose, made hasty preparations, and walked together to the chamber of the dying, while the beams of the morning star in the east served to remind us that, with the Christian, the night of death would be followed by the daylight of glory. We found her speechless, with her companion, children, and other friends, around her, while one was taking care of her infant but a few months old. By signs she made us understand that she wished us to sing; and while we were singing the hymn beginning

“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,” she fixed her eyes, with an earnest gaze, as if looking at some object above her, clapped her hands repeatedly, and expired. While returning home, just as the sun was rising, my prayer was, “Let me die the death of the righteous.”

If a wish to study brevity should lead me to omit recording, in my narrative, any more instances of Christian triumph in death, let no one suppose that this is the only case in which I have seen that

“Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

About this time I purchased “Foster’s Essays,” and found them a rich treasure. I would recommend, especially, the essay on “Decision of Character” to every young Christian, and particularly to every young minister. I have omitted to mention that my colleagues on this circuit, during the second year, were Rev. Luther Mead and Rev. C. Culver. In September, 1828, I rode about sixty miles on horseback to a camp meeting in the west part of New-Lebanon, in Columbia county, New-York. On the way, when nearly there, I was taken very ill, and for a short time had some apprehensions that I should die, for my disease was the same as that which carried my father, my grandmother,

and my aunt, out of time into eternity : but my mind was calmly stayed upon God. My disease abating, I moved slowly on to the meeting, and before it closed was able to preach once to the people, who bore with my weakness, and I believe ardently prayed for me, for it was a season of very peculiar blessedness to my soul.

I closed my labors on the Granville circuit in May, 1829. Since that time it has been divided and subdivided ; part of it has been set off to the New-England Conference, where it naturally belonged. In Westfield, where we preached once in two weeks on a week evening, in a private house, they have since built a Methodist church ; and when their congregation needed a larger and better one, it was erected ; and, in 1844, the New-England Conference held its session there,* and found accommodations among that people. Surely the “little one” sometimes becomes “a thousand,” according to prophecy.

There was then no railroad from Boston to Albany ; hence, when I received my appointment at the conference in Troy, in 1829, to the Chatham circuit, in the state of New-York, I

* The good bishop who presided at that conference was, I believe, an unconverted schoolmaster in or near the north-western corner of Connecticut, in the year 1827. “What hath God wrought?”

had to avail myself of the slow and wearisome motion of horses and wagons to convey my family and goods over the mountains that divide the valley of the Connecticut from the valley of the Hudson. On the summit of one of these mountains I met Bishop Hedding, going to attend one of the eastern conferences. He was traveling in a sulkey, and when I told him that I was on my way to do that part of the Lord's work which he had "advised," and in that place which he "judged most for the glory of God," he gave me kind encouragement to proceed.

Two days' journey brought me to New-Lebanon, to a house in the west part of the town, (near the residence of a good steward by the name of Jesse Hand,*) which the stewards had hired for the preacher who might come to their circuit. It was about six miles from the celebrated Shaker village, and about the same distance from the once famous "Springs." An old, pious, and respectable Methodist in New-Lebanon, had once been a Shaker in his earlier days, and well remembered the celebrated Mother Ann. The account which he gave me had

* This good man died in the triumph of faith in the town of Hudson, Walworth, Wisconsin Territory, January 15, 1846. His last words were about "a better country, even a heavenly."

no tendency to increase my confidence either in the piety of their leaders or the utility of the institution. My colleague, the first year, was Rev. Jacob Hall, who, being an older minister than myself, had charge of the circuit. The second year I was associated with a young minister, brother H. Burton, a probationer in the traveling connection. During the second year one of the appointments on the circuit (Nassau village) was supplied as a station by brother C. F. Pelton, though it remained connected in one quarterly conference. I can speak of my two years on the circuit more conveniently in the collective form of one *term*, because I cannot always recollect in which year some events happened.

At a quarterly meeting at China Hill, we were favored with the presence of brother Merwin, then on his way from Troy, where he resided, to a camp meeting at Pittsfield. In his discourse he described the prospect which the Christian enjoys of the heavenly land, under the emblem of the mariner, as he approaches the shores of a delightful country, raising his glass and surveying the beauties of the scene. Putting up one hand before the other, in the attitude of a man holding a spyglass to one eye and closing the other, he moved his

head slowly around, as if changing the direction of the glass from object to object, speaking at the same time, in the most feeling manner, of thrones and sceptres, crowns and palms of victory, "sweet fields of living green, and rivers of pure delight." God blessed his people through the instrumentality of his servant, and one of them appeared to be full of glorious hope. It was brother Hand, whose happy death I have just mentioned. Are not these brethren now exploring together those heavenly regions? Some who read this may remember with what child-like simplicity brother Merwin used to say, when happy in God, "There certainly is a heaven."

Two camp meetings were held on the circuit in Greenbush, on the grounds of Sebastian Weatherwax—one in 1829, the other in 1830. On this ground souls were "brought home to God." Here I heard, among other ministers, J. B. Stratton, E. Chichester, and Asa Kent, and was much blessed in listening to the messages of mercy from their lips. Brother Kent was from the New-England Conference, and labored especially, both in preaching and in the prayer meetings, to lead Christians to seek holiness of heart.

On the next sabbath after the camp meeting

in 1829, a young man tarried in class meeting after the preaching, at Chatham, and told us that, during the week previous, he had sought and found the Saviour. Not knowing him, and having heard nothing of his case at the camp meeting, I listened with some doubt, hardly able to "believe that he *was* a disciple." But, in a day or two, I went into the neighborhood where this young man was teaching school, and found Christians rejoicing in the happy change that had taken place in their schoolmaster. It appears that he went to the camp meeting a trifling, but not an immoral, backslider. The ball-room had, perhaps, stolen his heart away from God. He expected to meet some of his young associates at the meeting, but when he arrived there he found them not. The pious wife of my beloved colleague, who knew him, took an opportunity to exhort him earnestly to return to the Lord. A pious relative made a similar effort. The blessing of the Lord crowned the attempt; and, in the course of the afternoon, he entered the prayer meeting desiring an interest in the prayers of the people of God. Scarcely had he taken this decided step, before the prayer meeting was closed by the call for the people to resort to the stand for preaching. But the snare of the devil was broken; and just

as the sun was setting, in answer to the prayer of faith, "the Sun of righteousness" arose upon his soul "with healing in his wings." Thus were the prayers of his pious father and mother in a measure answered: they had often prayed that heaven and hell might not divide their little family. Those parents now sleep in their graves, and that son is preaching Jesus on the shores of Lake Champlain. He is now (August, 1847) presiding elder of the Plattsburgh district, in the Troy Conference.

Among the local preachers on this circuit, were two who had long been acquainted with Methodism, at both of whose houses I often found hospitable entertainment. Rev. David Weager resided in Ghent: his father's house, or barn, was one of Benjamin Abbott's preaching places when he traveled Dutchess circuit, in 1789, which, at that time, extended almost as far north, I believe, as the city of Albany. David found the Lord when but a child, and yet lives, I believe, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. Rev. Justus Gregory resided at Sand Lake, in Rensselaer county. When B. Abbott came to Dutchess circuit, J. Gregory was a proud young merchant in Dover; but God made that plain-spoken minister the means of his awakening and conversion.

One sabbath morning I rode eight miles from Valatie, (where I had preached on Saturday evening,) to Chatham, and preached at 10 o'clock. When the service was over, a young man, who was a near neighbor of mine, came to me and informed me that my house was burnt to ashes. I was, however, very grateful to God who had preserved all my dear family from the flames, and very thankful to his people for their kindness in making up the loss which I had sustained. Temporary conflagrations here are dreadful, but "who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

A. Scholefield, who had been my preacher in charge, (in 1824,) and, after that, my presiding elder, (in 1827,) was now a supernumerary preacher dwelling on this circuit. Once in four weeks I generally had the pleasure of calling at his house, and he would kindly go with me, pray for me, and help me in the pulpit. One evening which I spent with him I well remember: it was at his own house, in company with his family, brother Hall, his wife, my wife, and a young local preacher. The blessed Jesus was in the midst. We had a most melting, heavenly season, which I trust will be gratefully remembered by us all in another world.

In the neighborhood called Oak Hill we had quite a revival of religion : also in that part of New-Lebanon where I resided, several professed to find the Saviour. One morning, while I was at breakfast, a lad, who lived about two miles distant, rode up to the door and told me that his parents wished me to come to their house. I went directly, and found a young man, who was in their employment, earnestly seeking for mercy. When he found the blessing, he cheerfully and boldly declared the goodness of God to others, and some of them fled to the ark of safety. One young man, when ploughing in the field while his father and mother were gone to camp meeting, began to soliloquize thus :—“ My parents are at camp meeting, and I am here : but are they not praying for me ? I must pray for myself.” Soon after the return of his parents, I had an appointment on a week day at the school-house near their dwelling. I was surprised to see the son remain with the class after preaching, not having heard of any unusual seriousness in his mind : indeed, I was almost tempted to pass by him in the class meeting, but finally spoke to him like this :—“ Thomas, can you tell us the state of your mind ?” What was my joyful surprise when he answered, with flowing tears, “ I feel that I am a sin-

ner." He soon found that Jesus came to save sinners ; and he is now preaching that blessed truth among the mountains of Vermont.*

Among my papers, written at this time, I find accounts of two remarkable circumstances which came to my knowledge then, although they happened long ago. These papers I will abridge and transcribe :—

"Mr. C., a revolutionary soldier, said, that when the Methodist preachers first visited his neighborhood, he was told they were sent by King George, to subjugate the Americans by religious influence, as he had failed to conquer them by force of arms. Mr. C. felt indignation rising up against them to such a degree that he was almost willing to shoot them ; but he thought he would hear for himself. He went to the place appointed for preaching : but, when the preacher drew near the house, Mr. C. began to tremble. 'What does this mean?' thought he ; 'I have faced the British red-coats without trembling, why do I tremble now?' But when the minister preached, he found, as he afterward expressed it, 'that it was not King George, but King Jesus, who had sent them.' Afterward, when a proposition was made for those who wished to do so, to join class for six months on

* A few months since he fell asleep in Jesus.

probation at first, Mr. C. exclaimed, 'I am no six-months' man; put me down for life.'"

The other paper is entitled "The Contrast:" "During the revolutionary war, an American horseman, who was near the British army, observed a horse, belonging to a British officer, standing near a house; and, supposing the officer to be within, rode up, and when the Briton came out, presented his pistol, made him a prisoner, and led him off in triumph. It appears that, at the close of the war, this officer returned to his native country, but eventually emigrated to America. The war had closed, the noise of battle had ceased in the land, the zephyrs of peace moved gently over the hills and vales, and the doctrine of a free and full salvation was proclaimed among the people. Among others who embraced it by faith, was the American horseman whom we have mentioned. At length he commenced preaching the gospel of peace. In his travels he observed, at a certain place, a man deeply affected under the word. He partly recognized the man's countenance, but where or when he had seen him he could not tell. At the close of the meeting this man manifested a strong determination to serve the Lord, and to avail himself of the help which Christians could render him. Upon inquiry,

the first year, and not far from one hundred and twenty in the second, united with us in the different places on the circuit, including, in this last number, those who were received on probation in Nassau village, where brother Pelton chiefly labored.

Among those added to the Lord in this circuit, were a few who, I learned, thought that my preaching had been the particular instrument in the hands of God to bring them to Christ.

One of these, who has since gone rejoicing to glory, I beg leave to mention. His name was William Harvey Cox. He resided in East Nassau; and, if I rightly recollect, was nearly or quite the first subject of the revival I have just named. Long had his widowed mother and other pious friends prayed for the conversion of this amiable, hospitable young man. From his childhood he had been accustomed to minister unto the ambassadors of Christ. At length he heard a sermon from these words:—"Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell;" in which the guilt and danger of those who misimprove great privileges were plainly set before the congregation. His conscience was affected, his heart melted, and he turned to the Lord and found

mercy. His companion, also, sought the great salvation, and obtained the blood-bought prize.

One of our quarterly meetings on this circuit was held in the grove, our church in that place being too small to accommodate all who were expected. The presiding elder was necessarily absent, but brother Lewis Pease came in his place, and, though in feeble health, preached to the multitude with great power. A lay brother, from White Plains, Westchester county, being present, was called upon to exhort after one the sermons. He told of his pious, widowed mother, of her first connection with Methodism, of the opposition she met with from many, and of the thoughtlessness of her irreligious children. And then he told of her perseverance and her prayers, and of her children's conversion to God. These statements, and others which he made, gave force to his exhortations and interest to his remarks, and the Lord's people were much quickened.

In May, 1831, I closed my labors on Chatham circuit. I rejoice in the work wrought by the Lord during those two years; but I rejoice still more in what the Lord has since done among them at different times. When I visited them, about six years and a half afterward, I found that not less than thirteen new Methodist churches

had been erected in that time, in the section of country included in Chatham circuit when I went there to labor. To God be all the glory.

CONCLUSION.

SHOULD this simple narrative of the goodness of God to an unworthy worm prove, in the judgment of my brethren, in any degree useful to my fellow-men, and conducive to the glory of God, I *may*, at some future time, continue the narrative from the year 1831 to the present time. This would embrace an account of my labors in the counties of Columbia, Delaware, Schoharie, Greene, Albany, Westchester, Suffolk, and Queens, and in the Harlem mission in the upper part of the city and county of New-York. During those fifteen years I have been permitted to rejoice with my colleagues, on the different circuits where I have traveled, in the addition of about thirteen hundred to our religious societies. Let me close, by earnestly requesting every pious reader to pray fervently for the holiness, usefulness, and eternal salvation of the writer, and every member of his family.

THE END.





